EXPERT ADVICE FROM THE SERIES' GENEALOGISTS

BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING FAMILY HISTORY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 222 OCTOBER 2024 £5.75

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?®

SECOND BOER WAR ONLINE RECORDS

10 EASY STEPS TO GROW YOUR OWN FAMILY TREE

- ✓ Find the best free online resources
- ✓ Organise your research and check your facts
- ✓ Make the most of essential records

BLOOD ON THE TRACKS
The free database that reveals the hazards of railway work

ALL ABOUT THAT PLACE
The popular online history event returns

I discovered my grandfather was a WW1 spy in Egypt

The search for DAME JESSICA ENNIS-HILL's Jamaican roots

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- The 19th-century fight for voting rights
- Find family with our County Durham guide
- Canada Home Children inspection reports

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Welcome

Sarah's Top Tip

Even unusual names might have been shared by more than one person

It can be such a joy to research families with unusual names. It is certainly easier, but don't be fooled by it. A name that can seem unusual to you might be common in the local area where your ancestor came from. In our 'Q&A' section, Terri is confused by two Amelia Harringtons on **page 45** and on **page 48** Jane has to contend with two Nicholas Stubberfields. Always double-check that there aren't other candidates for a name. You may need to look at all incidents of the name in a locality, and build up a picture of the families who may also be related.

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Every time a new series of *Who Do You Think You Are?* arrives on our screens it inspires more people who want to explore their family's past. I would like to welcome any of you who have picked up this magazine for the first time to get some help with your first steps. It can seem daunting at first, but gradually you will find your feet and your tree will grow (and grow!). Even those of you who feel they have gone beyond the beginner stage will appreciate Laura Berry's expert tips on **page 15**. As a genealogist for the TV series, she spends her working life starting new trees, so who better to get advice from?

We've got other articles inspired by the current TV series, including our guide to Jamaican research (**page 33**) revealing details relating to Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill's episode, and our feature on railway accidents (**page 20**) written by Mike Esbester who appears in Rose Ayling-Ellis' episode. Even our 'Best Websites' article on the Second Boer War on **page 39** is a nod towards Paddy McGuinness' episode. I loved his reaction when he received his grandfather's medals. It's moments like this that demonstrate the power of family history.

There's plenty this month to inspire and guide any family historian, but I particularly want to encourage those of you who are planting the first seeds of your tree. May it lead to some fascinating discoveries!

Sarah

Sarah Williams Editor
sarah.williams@ourmedia.co.uk

Contributors

Laura Berry
Laura is a lead genealogist for the TV series. This month she shares her tips for getting started (**page 15**), as well as advice on tracing Jamaican roots (**page 33**).

Mike Esbester
When researchers discovered a railway accident in Rose Ayling-Ellis' tree, they went straight to Mike who heads up research on the topic. Read his tips on **page 20.**

Else Churchill
Else is the genealogist at the Society of Genealogists, and on **page 24** she inspires us to think about where our ancestors lived and join the society's All About That Place online event.

COVER IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES/A WOMAN WITH A HOE AND SEEDS, c1950s

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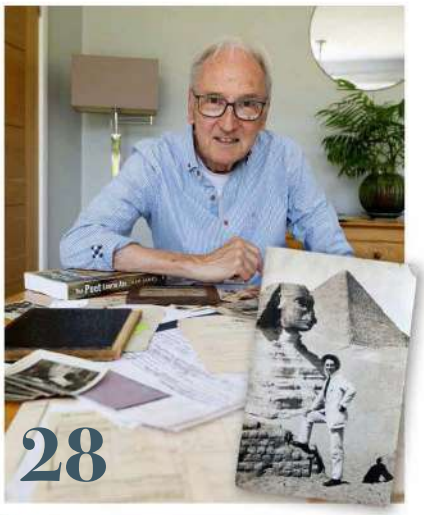

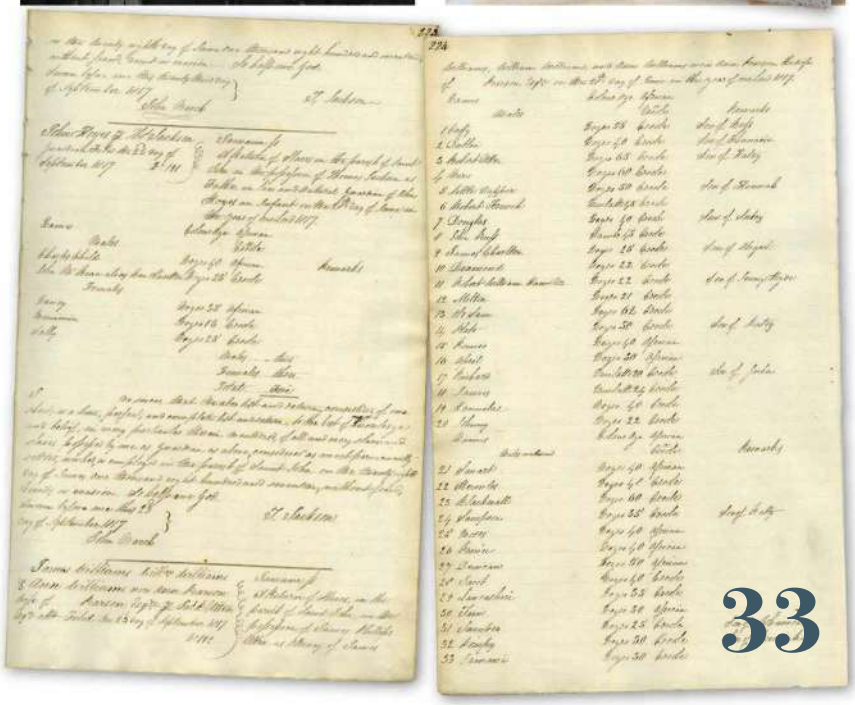

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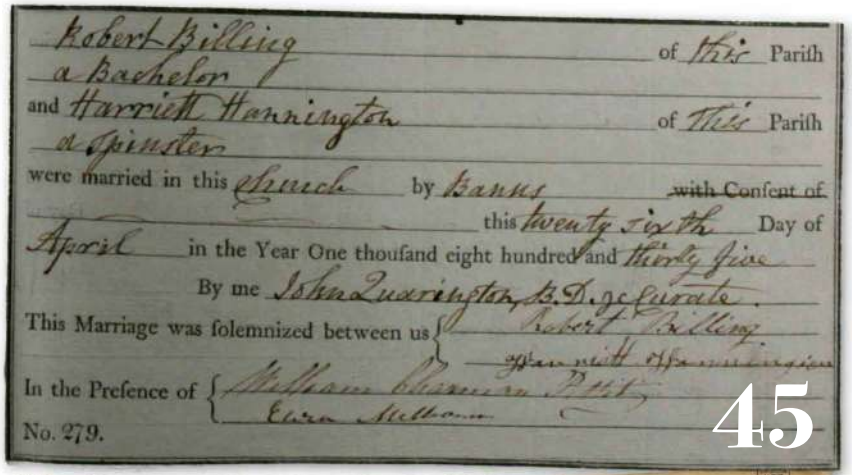
Robert Billing of this Parish
a Bachelor
and Harriett Hannington of this Parish
a Spinster
were married in this Church by Banns with Consent of
this twenty sixth Day of
April in the Year One thousand eight hundred and thirty five
By me John Quarington, B.D. & Curate
This Marriage was solemnized between us { Robert Billing
Hannah Hannington
In the Presence of { William Charman Pitt
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FIRST YEAR COMPULSION
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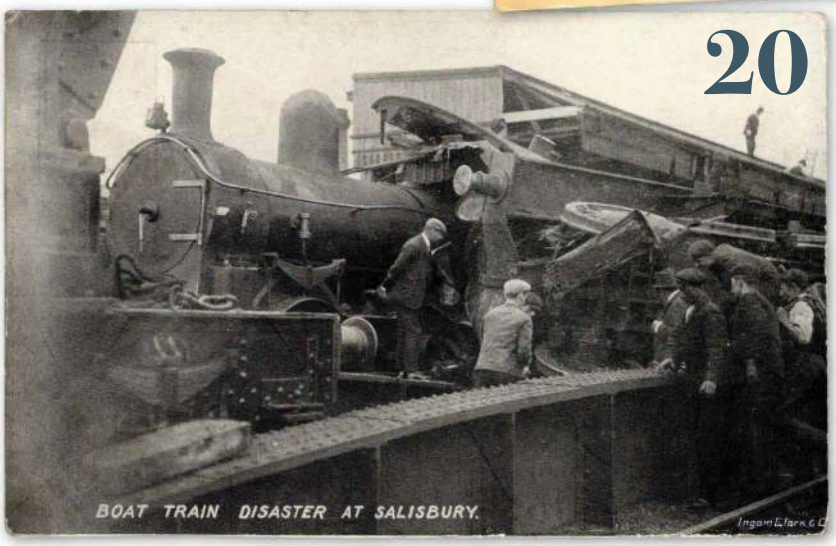

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Family Album Discovery

STAR LETTER

I wonder if any other readers have had a similar experience to the one I have just had. I started researching my family tree about 15 years ago. I was inspired in part by an envelope given to me by my great aunt, which contained a basic tree for one line of her family and some documents relating to a Richard Orlando Legg who had been the captain of the ship the *Helen Mary*. Initially I did nothing with this information, and sadly my great aunt passed away not long after.

Bring the story forward some 15 years and I have built my family tree to where no ancestor can easily be added. I have also managed to break down three dead ends so far using matches from AncestryDNA (**ancestry.co.uk/dna**). In all this time, having asked relatives many times, I have bemoaned to all who would listen the lack of family photographs of earlier ancestors.

Then in May this year my mother sadly passed away after a short illness, almost two years to the day after my father. This inevitably led to the need to clear their house. It was while clearing my parents' loft that in almost the last box I found the most unexpected thing.

There at the very bottom of the box was a book covered in brown paper. The book had obviously seen better days, but on opening it I found the most beautiful photo album. Page after page of old photos stared back at me. Some had little slips of paper, in my great aunt's handwriting, tucked with them as identification as to who they were, but the vast majority of the 76 photographs did not.

This album had obviously been long forgotten. Now the detective work begins again. Can I put names to these faces? Time will tell, but I know the vast majority of the photos were taken in London – which strongly suggests one particular line of my great aunt's side of the family.

Andrew Edwards, by email

Editor Replies Sounds like you've got quite the detective hunt on your hands. If you need any help with dating photos, do send images to our photo detective Jayne Shrimpton via our 'Q&A' email address: *wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk*.

A Sporting Romance

I am sure I am not alone in enjoying Jonathan Scott's 'Best Websites' article about sporting ancestors and Jad Adams' piece on the history of the modern Olympics in your August issue. Although my ancestors did not compete at such events, sport does feature in my past, because my parents Garfield Williams and Doreen Brown were courting at one: the 1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Cardiff.

My mother was always a very vocal armchair supporter of sport, particularly athletics, and from her letters and memorabilia I discovered that while she was on holiday in Bregenz, Austria, in 1958, she had written to Garfield encouraging him to go to Cardiff Arms Park and obtain tickets for the Commonwealth Games!

Evidently all of the swimming tickets were sold out, which disappointed him as he was a very keen swimmer, so he bought tickets for the opening ceremony and the next day's events instead.

Just a few days after arriving back in the UK my mother travelled from London to Cardiff to be with him for the opening of the Games. She had just purchased a Dacora camera and took several images including one of the newly introduced Queen's Baton Relay, the last leg being run by Ken Jones *(pictured)*. The silver-gilt and enamelled baton decorated with Welsh national symbols had been carried from Buckingham Palace, initially by Roger Bannister, before it headed to Wales visiting many English and Welsh counties on its way. It carried a message from the Head of the Commonwealth and Ken Jones handed the baton to the Duke of Edinburgh, who then read the Queen's message out to the spectators.

Like the Olympic torch, the baton symbolises peace and friendship in sport and has been the prelude to every Commonwealth Games since. Doreen and Garfield married just weeks after the Games!

Jane Evans, Benhall Green, Suffolk

Jane emailed us her mother's photo from the 1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games, plus scans of these tickets

Editor Replies Thanks for sharing these lovely photographs with us Jane. Your email is a great reminder that sport was important to our ancestors in many different ways.

Kim Billie Thompson answered our question, "Which of your ancestors would you invite over for dinner?"
My 4x great grandmother Elizabeth Woolterton (née Cully) although I wouldn't ask her to bring any cake, as she was hanged in 1815 for allegedly adding arsenic to one!

WikiTree Versus Family Tree

Having read Bob Shaw's letter in your September issue bemoaning faulty online trees, I can fully sympathise. I would encourage Bob to not get too wound up by errors on individual trees, irritating though it may be. Ultimately these are personal accounts, and thus the user can do whatever they want.

Bob mentioned that he had found the Family Tree on FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**) to be error-filled as a shared tree, and I would agree. However, has he tried WikiTree (**wikitree.com**)? It's not perfect, and is heavily US-centric in its current state, but requires signing an 'honour code' to participate and clear sources on profiles, as well as stricter controls for who can edit profiles pre-1700 and pre-1500.

I think that WikiTree's mission to preserve an accurate, fully sourced shared tree for posterity is an honourable one, and it deserves the support of those of us who take genealogy seriously.

Pete Dewhirst, Glastonbury

Editor Replies I haven't looked at WikiTree for a while, so thank you for your suggestion Pete.

Benefiting From Other People's Trees

Further to recent letters, I have two methods I use when looking at other people's online trees, which I only do when there are no obvious other sources on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) or Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) to take my lines further. Firstly, I have found on several occasions that, if nine people have one ancestor and just one another, it is quite likely that the odd one out is the correct one. Secondly, all my trees are printed in folders, and any names only found on other people's trees are highlighted yellow (if looks likely), blue (if dates/places are slightly doubtful) or red (probably wrong). Those where I have birth/marriage records, for example, are highlighted green.

I have been compiling my tree for about eight years. While I suppose I can understand people who have also spent a long time compiling their trees keeping them private, I find it a little odd that they should then complain about others having the wrong information. Perhaps if your tree was public, more people would find the correct route! I have second cousins who won't share their information with me, in case theirs is wrong.

Martin Cobham, Cromford, Derbyshire

Editor Replies I like your tip about the 'odd one out' being more likely to be correct. It is also possible to do the equivalent of highlighting entries by using the tagging function on Ancestry and selecting the 'Unverified' tag.

Are They Celebrities?

I am pleased to see that there is to be a new series of *Who Do You Think You Are?* on TV,

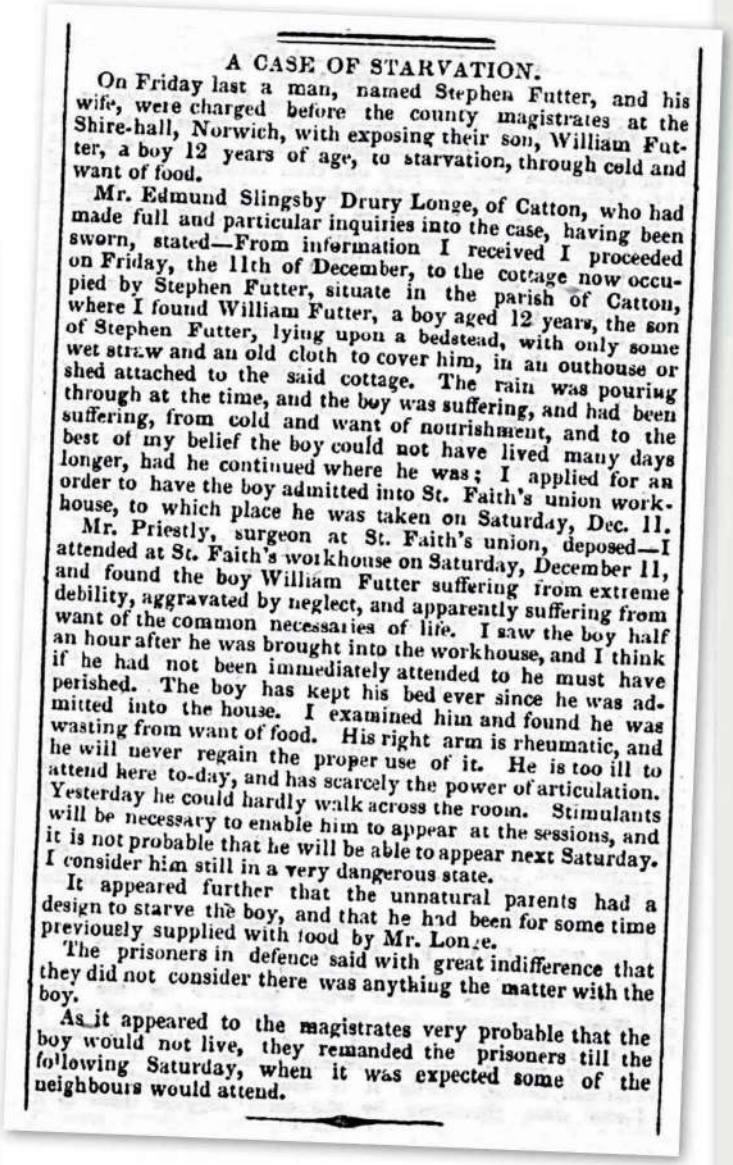
but I have to confess that I am not overly fond of celebrities and do not understand why they choose so many I have never heard of. It would be better if they chose people with the most interesting histories, rather than self-publicists. More importantly, it is a pity that they tend to have people who have families with roots abroad. Most viewers are almost certainly more interested in hearing about ancestors more like their own – whose histories might give them clues to help them with their own research.
Jeremy Baker, by email

Editor Replies I also don't always recognise some of the celebrities who feature on *WDYTYA?*, but that never stops me from enjoying an episode. I agree that episodes that reflect my family history are especially enjoyable, but none of my direct family was affected by the Holocaust and yet there are important and memorable stories to be told. For me an important element is also the celebrity's engagement in the process. What do other readers think makes a good *WDYTYA?* episode?

A Tale Of Terror

A few years ago, via DNA, I managed to find out who my late father's natural father was, and where he lived. So, at the next opportunity we packed our caravan and headed to North Norfolk. Through researching online I discovered a link to the Futter family living in the area in the early to mid-1800s. After looking on the British Newspaper Archive (**britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**) I was horrified to discover that one branch of the family were accused of starving their 12-year-old son. Stephen Futter and his second wife were arrested and appeared in court.

I was really upset to read this, and put the story out of my mind.



A CASE OF STARVATION.

On Friday last a man, named Stephen Futter, and his wife, were charged before the county magistrates at the Shire-hall, Norwich, with exposing their son, William Futter, a boy 12 years of age, to starvation, through cold and want of food.

Mr. Edmund Slingsby Drury Longe, of Catton, who had made full and particular inquiries into the case, having been sworn, stated—From information I received I proceeded on Friday, the 11th of December, to the cottage now occupied by Stephen Futter, situate in the parish of Catton, where I found William Futter, a boy aged 12 years, the son of Stephen Futter, lying upon a bedstead, with only some wet straw and an old cloth to cover him, in an outhouse or shed attached to the said cottage. The rain was pouring through at the time, and the boy was suffering, and had been suffering, from cold and want of nourishment, and to the best of my belief the boy could not have lived many days longer, had he continued where he was; I applied for an order to have the boy admitted into St. Faith's union workhouse, to which place he was taken on Saturday, Dec. 11.

Mr. Priestly, surgeon at St. Faith's union, deposed—I attended at St. Faith's workhouse on Saturday, December 11, and found the boy William Futter suffering from extreme debility, aggravated by neglect, and apparently suffering from want of the common necessaries of life. I saw the boy half an hour after he was brought into the workhouse, and I think if he had not been immediately attended to he must have perished. The boy has kept his bed ever since he was admitted into the house. I examined him and found he was wasting from want of food. His right arm is rheumatic, and he will never regain the proper use of it. He is too ill to attend here to-day, and has scarcely the power of articulation. Yesterday he could hardly walk across the room. Stimulants will be necessary to enable him to appear at the sessions, and it is not probable that he will be able to appear next Saturday. I consider him still in a very dangerous state.

It appeared further that the unnatural parents had a design to starve the boy, and that he had been for some time previously supplied with food by Mr. Longe.

The prisoners in defence said with great indifference that they did not consider there was anything the matter with the boy.

As it appeared to the magistrates very probable that the boy would not live, they remanded the prisoners till the following Saturday, when it was expected some of the neighbours would attend.

Katharine was horrified to uncover this story of abuse involving her relations

However, now that I am recently part-retired, I have reread the story and want to find out more. What happened to the young boy? Were his parents convicted, and if so for how long? What happened to their younger children? How common was starvation at this time? Questions, questions!

I would be interested to find out if other readers have come across similar stories. I did not know my paternal grandfather, as he abandoned my grandmother when my dad was a young boy. I do not know much about the family at all, so have no emotional connection to them. My dad did say that there were some female members of the family who were kind to his mother.

I have visited the parish in Norfolk where one of the Futter daughters married and moved to, and she seems to have had a bad time. Her husband left her, and she died soon after. Her young family were split up – the boys going into the local workhouse, and the daughters being taken in by their aunts. One of these daughters is my ancestor and she moved to Suffolk, near Ipswich.

Interestingly, at the start of the Second World War my dad was evacuated to this area, from Hackney in London. He always wondered whether the family he was sent to was related to him in some way. Perhaps I'll manage to find out one day!
Katharine McKinnon, by email

Editor Replies What an appalling story. Now I want to know whether William Futter survived. I suspect I will be diving into his story this evening…

YOUR LETTER IN PRINT We reserve the right to edit any letters sent to the magazine. Messages posted to our Facebook wall and tweets sent to us may also appear in print. The choice of Star Letter is the editor's and the prize is subject to change.

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What's On

Email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk* to feature your event here for free

PICK OF THE MONTH

This one-day online conference celebrates the next generation of genealogists

Catherine Theunissen will be one of the speakers

NextGENeration – Discoveries

5 October

w **tinyurl.com/sog-nextgeneration-2024**

Jointly hosted by the Family History Federation and the Society of Genealogists, this online event spotlights genealogists who are under the age of 35. There will be talks from 15 speakers from around the world, including 'Biological and Family Identity in the Context of Nature vs. Nurture' by Catherine Theunissen from New Zealand; 'What to Do When the Discoveries Run Out' by Kathryn Taylor and 'From Our Ancestors Come Our Names: Restoring a Crooked Limb on the Family Tree' by Megan Crook, both from Australia; 'Get Up and Go: Genealogy for Good' by Daniel Loftus from Ireland; and 'Gen Z and Genealogy' by Chukwudi Ewa from the USA. The day will culminate in 'Transitioning from Passion to Profession', a panel discussion led by Elizabeth Hodges aimed at young genealogists who are interested in building a career. Pay what you can.

IN PERSON

Vergiss Mich Nicht: Stolpersteine, The Stones Of Remembrance

Until 13 September

a **The Wiener Holocaust Library, London**

t 020 7636 7247

w **wienerholocaustlibrary.org/exhibition/vergiss-mich-nicht-stolpersteine-the-stones-of-remembrance/**

This exhibition explores the lives of Inge Buchdahl and Alfred Katz, victims of the Holocaust who are now commemorated on *Stolpersteine*, or stumbling stones, using family papers and photographs that are among the collections held by The Wiener Holocaust Library. Free.

Migration Throughout The UK

18 September

a **Trinity Methodist Church Hall, Dereham**

e *secretary@mnfhs.org*

w **mnfhs.org/programme/2024-meetings/**

The Mid Norfolk Family History Society's annual general meeting will include a talk by Debbie Bradley explaining how to trace your ancestors as they moved around the country. Free for members, £3 for non-members.

Peak District Family History Conference

21 September

a **Palace Hotel, Buxton**

w **peakdistrictnetwork.wixsite.com/familyhistory/about-5**

This conference from the Peak District Family History Network includes four expert talks – 'Was Your Ancestor a Criminal?' from Dr Colin Chapman, 'Making the Best Use of The National Archives' from Simon Fowler, 'British Widows of the First World War' from Andrea Hetherington and 'Reading Old Handwriting' from Ian Waller. There will also be an exhibition hall featuring stalls by family history companies and societies, and books and maps will be on sale. £30.

Local History And Heritage Fair

28 September

a **National Waterfront Museum, Swansea**

t 0300 111 2333

e *waterfront@museumwales.ac.uk*

w **museum.wales/swansea/whatson/12252/Local-History-and-Heritage-Fair/**

This event, in partnership with the Historical Association's Swansea Branch as well as the Royal Institution of South Wales – Friends of Swansea Museum, will enable you to find out more about local and family history. Free.

Leicestershire & Rutland Family History Society Golden Jubilee Celebration

5 October

a **Leicester Adult Education Centre**

w **lrfhs.org.uk/news/index.php#news22**

Leicestershire & Rutland Family History Society is celebrating its 50th birthday with this special event. The talks will be 'Housing the People of Leicester 1945–1980' by Ned Newitt, 'Getting Started in Family History' by Sue Lester and 'Where Are You From? No, Where Are You *Really* From?' by Audrey Osler. There will also be exhibition stalls, a family history helpdesk, an exhibition and children's activities. Free.

IN PERSON & ONLINE

The City Of London Police During WWII

20 September

a **Shoe Lane Library, City of London**

t 020 7583 7178

e *shoelane@cityoflondon.gov.uk*

w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-police-wwii-in-pers / tinyurl.com/eventbrite-police-wwii-online**

This talk by police and family historian Rebecca Walker will also be streamed over Zoom. Free.

ONLINE

All About That Place

27 September – 6 October

w **www.subscribepage.com/allaboutthatplace**

This virtual event, broadcast across ten days over social media, consists of 140 short 10-minute talks on a range of topics as well as fun interactive challenges and activities that will encourage participants to think differently about family and local history. The associated Facebook Group already has over two thousand members after last year's successful launch. Popular speakers include Nick Barratt, Dave Annal and Angela Buckley and topics will range from WW2 maps to DNA testing, tech demos and murder! Find out more about the event on page 24.

BOOK AHEAD

Learn how to share your ancestors' stories with this course

Writing Your Family History With Natalie Pithers And Janet Few

Starts 11 October

w **tinyurl.com/sog-pithers-few**

In this six-week online course from the Society of Genealogists, Natalie Pithers (**genealogystories.co.uk**) and Janet Few (**thehistoryinterpreter.wordpress.com**) will show you how to turn your years of genealogical research into captivating stories or organised reports – plus Dai Davies (**youtube.com/GenealCymru**) will demystify copyright. £75 for members, £96 for non-members.

CATHERINE THEUNISSEN

News

Rosemary Collins and Sarah Williams report on data releases and genealogy news

Troubled DNA firm 23andMe 'committed' to family history

DNA testing company 23andMe (23andme.com) says that it's still committed to family history customers despite its security and financial woes.

The USA-based firm, which has seen its value plummet since it went public in 2021 and now risks being delisted from the Nasdaq stock exchange, has been accused of neglecting family historians as it looks towards health products and services to find growth.

Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine editor Sarah Williams said, "23andMe's recent financial report focuses purely on its plans in medical fields, and makes no mention of family history. Consumers who have taken a 23andMe DNA test for ancestry reasons, or who are thinking of taking a test, deserve to know whether the company will support them in future."

Along with a general downturn in consumers buying DNA tests, 23andMe suffered when in October 2023 hackers breached about 14,000 customers' accounts. They gained access to the data of 6.9 million people who were listed as those users' relations on the site, including via the DNA Relatives tool.

23andMe has disabled some features within DNA Relatives, and linked the decision to the breach.

Genetic genealogy expert and regular *WDYTYA? Magazine* contributor Debbie Kennett said, "We still can't access the segment data, or download the match lists. You also can't see the Chromosome Browser view showing the location of the shared segments. It's now been nine months or more since they removed access."

Family historians expressed their frustration on Facebook.

Jan Daniells complained, "Now that the Chromosome Browser has been disabled, [the website is] far less useful. What's also really disappointing is the almost total lack of communication."

23andMe's headquarters in Sunnyvale, California, USA

23andMe has also stopped attending the annual family history conference RootsTech, which it used to sponsor.

23andMe's share value dropped from $17.65 in February 2021 after it went public to $0.37 in August 2024.

'23andMe's recent financial report makes no mention of family history'

That same month, 23andMe released its first-quarter fiscal year 2025 financial results which revealed a total revenue of $40 million, equivalent to a decrease of about 34 per cent year on year.

The announcement arrived only days after the firm rejected a proposal by co-founder and chief executive officer Anne Wojcicki to buy the company back at $0.40 per share.

However, a 23andMe spokesperson told *WDYTYA? Magazine*, "23andMe is committed to the continual improvement of its ancestry features, and supporting family historians. Earlier this year, we launched our new Historical Matches feature that offers unparalleled insights into customers' DNA connections with ancient and historical individuals, using cutting-edge technology developed by 23andMe and published in the journal *Science*.

"With regard to tools that enable the display and comparison of matching segment data that were put on pause last year, we understand these features are critical for the genealogy community, and we are actively looking at ways to restore the functionality offered by these features with additional privacy and security protection."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

AI Record Finder heads off into the sunset

MyHeritage withdraws AI Record Finder search tool

Family history website MyHeritage (**myheritage.com**) has discontinued its AI-powered research tool only seven months after it was released. MyHeritage launched AI Record Finder, which enabled users of the site to find relevant records by 'talking' to a virtual assistant, in December 2023. However, on 28 July MyHeritage announced that it would discontinue AI Record Finder from 9 August. The company added, "We understood from the feedback we received that most genealogists preferred the more traditional search format."

The model shows Robert ready for battle

3D model of Robert the Bruce's face goes on show

A 3D model of Scottish king Robert the Bruce's face, produced from a cast of his skull, has gone on display to the public for the first time at Dunfermline Abbey in Fife, to mark the 750th anniversary of his birth. The model was created as part of a collaboration between the University of Glasgow and Liverpool John Moores University's Face Lab, using historical research and scientific analysis, and will be on display until 7 December 2024. Information about visiting the abbey is available online at **historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/dunfermline-abbey-and-palace**.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND / GETTY IMAGES

Scottish WW1 pension indexes suffer new delays

Seaforth Highlanders in the First World War

A 2018 project to index Scottish Pension Appeal Tribunal records from the First World War is still incomplete.

The National Records of Scotland's (NRS; **nrscotland.gov.uk**) series PT6 holds the records of pensions awarded to soldiers who were injured in the First World War, or to the next of kin of those killed.

In January 2018, family historian and *WDYTYA? Magazine* contributor Chris Paton reported on his blog Scottish Genes (**scottishgenes.blogspot.com**) that NRS had received a Wellcome Trust grant to index the records, and aimed to finish by December 2019.

On 12 July 2024, Scottish genealogy business Scottish Indexes (**scottishindexes.com**) left a comment on the Facebook page of ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**), NRS's online branch, asking about the records.

Responding to the query, ScotlandsPeople said, "Hi – the Pension Appeal Tribunal records (ref. PT6) were catalogued as a result of funding by the Wellcome Trust. This project didn't quite complete cataloguing the whole collection, but work is currently underway to address this shortfall. Work to capture digital images was not included in the Wellcome Trust project, but imaging work is currently in progress. Discussions will soon be taking place regarding the potential for online release, though no decisions or timescales have yet been agreed."

CAN YOU HELP?

Pupils visit St Mary's churchyard, which is being surveyed to create a digital map of memorials

Members of the public are invited to contribute to the first-ever digital map of a churchyard in Essex. St Mary's Church in Woodham Ferrers (**stmarysheritagehub.co.uk**) has commissioned AG Intl, a digital-surveying company, to carry out GPS mapping of the church and churchyard, finding the location of every memorial. The church dates back to the 12th century, and some of the memorials to 1558. In partnership with the Essex Society for Family History (**https://www.esfh.org.uk**), St Mary's will create a free online map of the memorials, along with photos and scans of the relevant burial register record from Essex Record Office (**essexrecordoffice.co.uk**). If you have any information about anyone buried at the church, please email *stmaryshh@gmail.com*.

Over 3.5 million directory records released online

Family history site TheGenealogist (thegenealogist.co.uk) has added 29 directories from the 1930s, with records of over 3.5 million people.

This includes 24 *Kelly's Directories* from the following years: 1930 – Devonshire and Cornwall; Kent; Ipswich and Neighbourhood; and Putney and Roehampton; 1931 – Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire; Dorsetshire; Wiltshire; Hampshire and the Isle of Wight; the Channel Islands; and Somersetshire, Gloucestershire and the City of Bristol; 1932 – Bournemouth, Poole, Parkstone, Christchurch etc; Brighton and Hove; Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire; Leicestershire and Rutland; Warwick, Leamington Spa, Stratford-upon-Avon and Kenilworth; and Warwickshire; 1933 – Cambridgeshire; Hertfordshire; Kilburn and Willesden; Norfolk and Suffolk; and Suffolk; and 1934 – Kent; Sussex, Chichester, Selsey and Neighbourhood; and Westmorland.

The other directories are the 1933 Nottingham, Lincoln, Peterborough and districts telephone directory; the 1934 Nottingham, Leicester and Derby telephone directory; the 1934 *Ward's Directory* of Whitley Bay, Tynemouth, North and South Shields, Jarrow, Wallsend, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne and adjacent villages; a Malta telephone directory (1933); and the 1934 New Zealand Post Office directory.

Kelly's Directory of the Channel Islands (1931)

TNA publishes new guides

The National Archives at Kew (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**) has created four new online research guides to help family historians trace their overseas forebears using the records in its collections.

The topics covered by the research guides are ancestors who emigrated from Britain to Australia and New Zealand; relations who emigrated to the USA and Canada; Irish forebears; and African relatives, including individuals who migrated to the UK from Africa, as well as those who lived in British colonies in Africa during the period of the British Empire.

All of the guides are available via **nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/**.

Families prepare to fly from London Airport to new lives in Australia, 1948

5 November

WDYTYA? Magazine has set the date for this year's Transcription Tuesday event – more news soon

John Portmann

An American man believes he is the first person to prove he is entitled to Irish citizenship using DNA testing alone (**tinyurl.com/irish-times-portmann**)

'Carlise'

Staff at Tullie House Museum in Carlisle, Cumbria, have been left red-faced after misspelling the city's name on promotional banners (**tinyurl.com/bbc-carlise**)

15,995

The number of Northamptonshire land, poll and window tax lists (1698–1801) added to Findmypast (**bit.ly/fmp-northants**)

Acton Scott

The Shropshire heritage farm featured in the BBC Two series *Victorian Farm* has reopened on a limited basis (**tinyurl.com/bbc-acton**)

A 1910 register from Abergavenny Union

Ancestry adds Gwent workhouse records

Family history website Ancestry (ancestry.co.uk) has added a collection of 1,006,342 workhouse records from the Welsh county of Gwent.

The collection, which covers 1833–1957, can be searched by name and includes digitised copies of the original records, which are preserved by Gwent Archives (**gwentarchives.gov.uk**).

The Victorian workhouse system in England and Wales was set up by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act.

Under the system, local parishes formed Poor Law unions to share the cost of providing for the poor.

The collection covers the Poor Law unions of Abergavenny, Bedwellty, Bryn Institution, Chepstow, Monmouth, Newport, and Pontypool.

The wide range of records featured in the collection illustrates the many services that were provided by the Poor Law system. They include workhouse admission and discharge registers; religious creed registers; vaccination registers; records of children under care of the Poor Law union; medical-relief records; birth, marriage and death records for paupers in the workhouse; lists of lunatics; records of medical officers' salaries; and orders of removal, for paupers who were removed to another parish. Later records also include details of children boarded out with foster parents.

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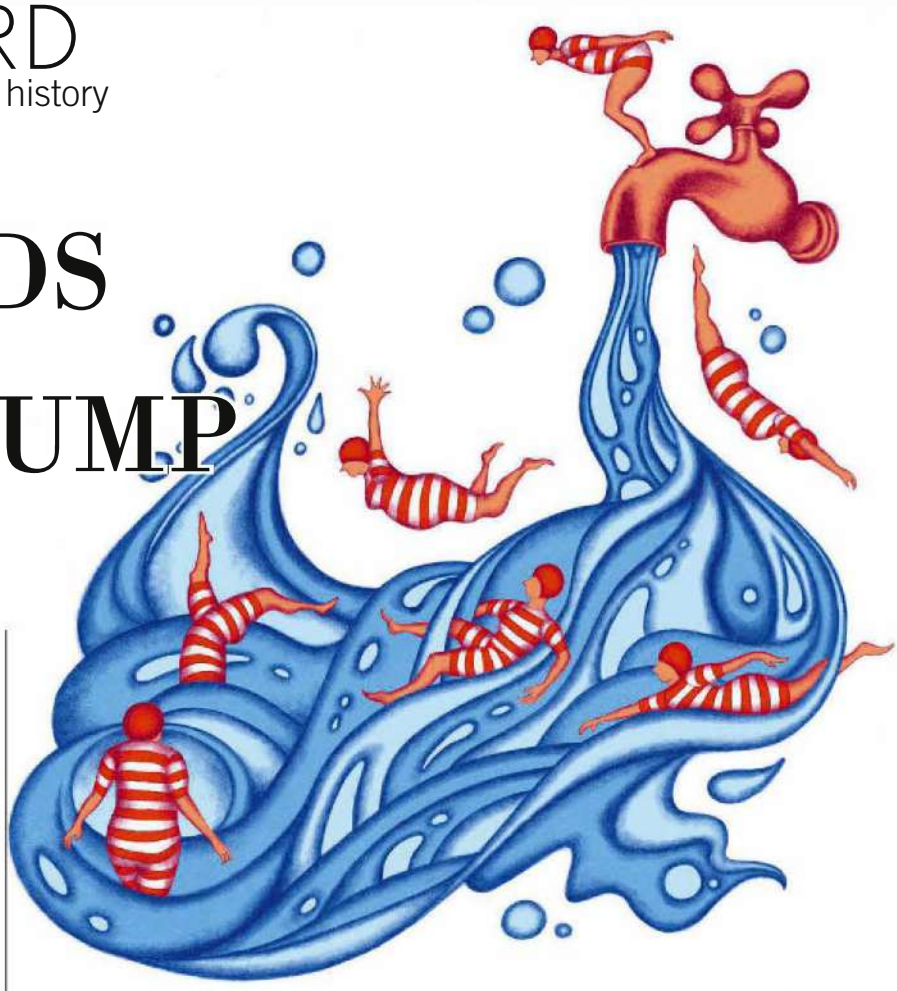
All Hands To The Pump



Alan Crosby explains how our ancestors got their water before modern plumbing

Earlier in the year we had a short holiday in Sussex, north of Hastings. It coincided with a dramatic news story – the bursting of a major water main deep inside an area of woodland beyond the town, and the cutting of supplies to more than 32,000 properties, in some cases for a week. Fortunately (from our point of view) the place where we were staying was not affected.

Four days later, it was Bank Holiday Monday, and almost inevitably, the rain was torrential. Looking for somewhere under cover, we visited the 'Brede Steam Giants', located six miles north of Hastings. At the end of the 19th century it was apparent to the borough council that the town's water supply was inadequate. Fast-growing demand was outstripping the traditional sources, and it would be necessary to look further afield. Therefore, a new pumping station was built in 1900 at Brede, and eventually three huge and magnificent steam engines pumped up 3.5 million gallons of water every day, delivering it via a new pipeline to two reservoirs above the town.

Most people had to draw water from natural resources or wells

Today, converted from steam power to compressed air, two of these engineering marvels still operate (although they no longer pump the water). It was mesmerising to see the Giants in action, and amazing to appreciate the massive investment that they represented 125 years ago. No expense was spared to provide reliable fresh and clean water to the people of Hastings and adjacent areas, and of course such schemes were replicated in hundreds of other places up and down the country.

But what about the provision of water before the age of steam? Along the coast from Hastings is the fascinating ancient port of Rye, built on a hill above the sea. At the top of the town is the church of St Mary the Virgin, whose churchyard contains a very curious structure dating from the mid-1730s. It is an oval brick-built cistern, with an oval tower on top, and was intended to store water that was laboriously pumped from the valley using horsepower. It held about 20,000 gallons, which were supplied by gravity to properties in the town by means of wooden water-pipes.

Quite a few towns had such systems for the benefit of 'superior' residents (who could afford the charges). Sometimes the supply was at a conduit or wellhead, usually a small covered building with a brass tap or faucet to control the use of the water. Typically, a stream or springs some distance outside the town would be diverted along a pipe and gravity would carry the water to the conduit where the better-class citizens (or more probably their servants) could fill pails and buckets as required. Such semi-public water supplies were found in London from as early as the 1230s, and also in the likes of Oxford, Cambridge, Exeter and Southampton, as well as a range of smaller places including Grantham, Preston, Wells, King's Lynn and Lichfield. They were often controlled by the town council, or by bodies of trustees, but might be funded in part by bequests from public-spirited benefactors. Alternatively, there might be a 'common pump' in the street, which could be used by citizens who had a key – the pump would be locked to prevent its use by all and sundry.

Most people, however, were not so lucky, and had to draw water from natural resources or wells – which were often polluted.

Today, thanks in no small part to the endeavours of our Victorian forebears, and the huge sums that were spent by public and private bodies in building reservoirs, pumping stations, treatment works and networks of pipelines, we tend to take piped water for granted. It was one of the great success stories of the 19th century, but it only takes a burst main for us to realise how much we depend on that Victorian infrastructure. I'm glad I don't have to take my bucket to the well, as my ancestors had to do!

ALAN CROSBY lives in Lancashire and is the editor of *The Local Historian*

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10 EASY STEPS TO GROW YOUR OWN FAMILY TREE

Laura Berry from *Who Do You Think You Are?* shares her expert advice for uncovering your ancestors' stories

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Laura Berry is one of the genealogists on *WDYTYA?* and has worked on the programme for over 10 years

Every new series of *WDYTYA?* inspires viewers to start their family history, and take advantage of the abundance of records that are now online. The subscription websites Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) and Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) have digitised millions of archival documents; there's a lot of overlap, but they also have unique collections. Many libraries offer members free access on site, or you can register for free trial periods.

You'll also want to try TheGenealogist (**thegenealogist.co.uk**) and MyHeritage (**myheritage.com**), while the vast free site FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**) is well worth signing up to because it has indexes as well as many records from across the world. Even where sites host the same record sets, the indexes are often site-specific. So if you can't find an ancestor on one website, try another.

If you have Scottish roots then you need to check out the government site ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**), which is a pay-to-view service, although some indexes will also be found on the main genealogy sites.

The National Archives in Kew (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**) provides free on-site access to a host of digital-subscription services, and is home to millions of original records stretching back a thousand years. Its online catalogue Discovery (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**) also acts as a gateway to original documents in archives across the country, which are worth exploring once you've exhausted online records. The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth is also a great resource for researching Welsh ancestry (**library.wales**).

The process might be daunting, but taking it one stage at a time, and checking each fact carefully as you go, is the best way to build up your knowledge. With that advice in mind, here are the 10 essential steps that will get your research off on the right foot.

1 Talk To Relatives

This is the first thing we do when investigating each celebrity's roots: interview them and their family, and keep detailed notes to help sketch out a draft family tree. Add to your own knowledge by talking to as many close relations as possible, particularly the eldest in each generation. Gather names of parents, grandparents, great grandparents, going as far back as they know, and inquire about any intriguing family legends. In her *WDYTYA?* episode from 2023 actor Claire Foy's 93-year-old grandfather James was able to tell her about his father Charles Stimpson, who was killed in a motorcycle accident. Ask about dates and places of birth, marriage and death, as well as occupations, to help with the next steps.

Older relatives should be the first port of call for any family historian

2 Organise Your Information

You're hopefully going to end up with a mountain of information, so find a way to organise it from the get-go – whether that's a document binder, folders on your computer, specialist family history software or a genealogy website. Uploading your draft tree to Ancestry or Findmypast helps you connect with potential distant relatives who have the same individuals in their trees, and you may learn stories that have been passed down other branches. In his 2015 episode choirmaster Gareth Malone was able to meet with another descendant of his forebear Edmund Payne, a celebrated Victorian performer. She showed Gareth a photo of Edmund on a tricycle with his children, and gave him footage depicting Edmund performing. Sharing resources with other family historians can save you time and money, but do check the leads they give you carefully.

You can really see the family resemblance between Gareth Malone and his ancestor Edmund Payne

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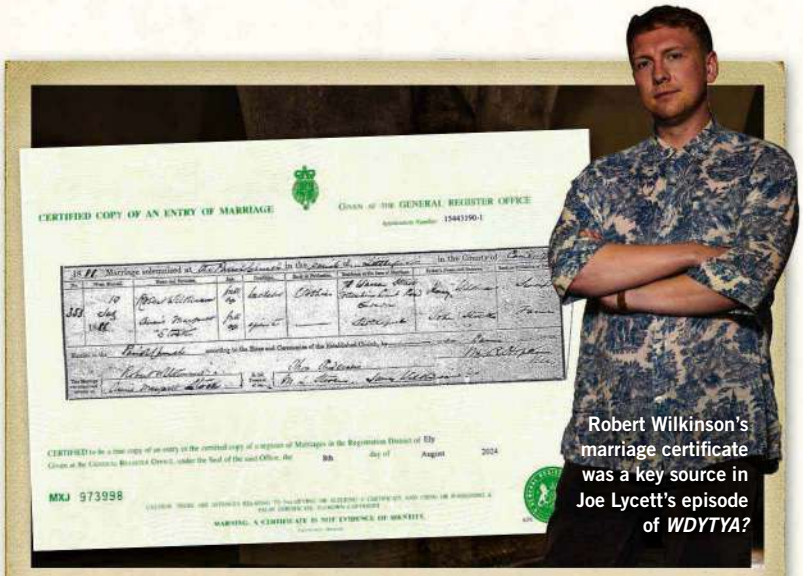


Robert Wilkinson's marriage certificate was a key source in Joe Lycett's episode of *WDYTYA?*

3 Find Civil Registration Certificates

Since 1 July 1837 births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales have had to be registered with the civil authorities. Centralised indexes are on most genealogy sites; large parts are free at FreeBMD (**freebmd.org.uk**). You can then order certificates for a fee from the General Register Office's website (**www.gro.gov.uk**).

In his 2021 episode comedian and presenter Joe Lycett's aunt showed him his great great grandfather Robert Wilkinson's marriage certificate, revealing he was a clothier who married Annie Stocks in 1888 in Cambridgeshire, and his father was chimney sweep Henry Wilkinson. Marriage certificates also include the bride and groom's ages, marital status and abode. This information enabled us to find Robert's birth certificate in 1841 telling us his mother was Susannah Wilkinson, formerly Winters. Death certificates provide place and cause of death, age, and whether next of kin registered the event.

Civil registration began in Scotland on 1 January 1855, and you can use ScotlandsPeople to access free indexes and pay for full register entries. Scottish records are more detailed: death certificates show parents' names, birth certificates indicate where and when the parents married, and marriage certificates include mothers' and fathers' names.

4 Check The 1939 Register

The 1939 Register digitised on Findmypast and Ancestry is where former Spice Girl Mel C discovered her working-class great grandmother surprisingly described as a moneylender in the latest series. The register was compiled in September 1939 after war broke out, primarily to aid with issuing ID cards to the civilian population. But the National Health Service updated it for many years afterwards, adding women's married surnames after they had wed.

The register is arranged by address and tells us each resident's date of birth, marital status and occupation. The details of people who might still be alive are redacted, but can be opened using a simple online form and submitting a death certificate (see **tinyurl.com/tna-guide-1939-reg-closed**). Members of the Armed Forces were not registered, unless on leave.

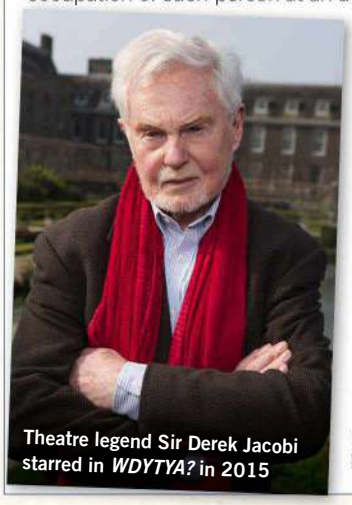
The 1939 National Identity Register for people in Scotland is not online, but you can download and post a form asking staff at the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh to search for a deceased individual (**tinyurl.com/nrs-1939-reg-form**).

Mary Bilsborough's entry in the 1939 Register revealed her occupation to descendant Mel C

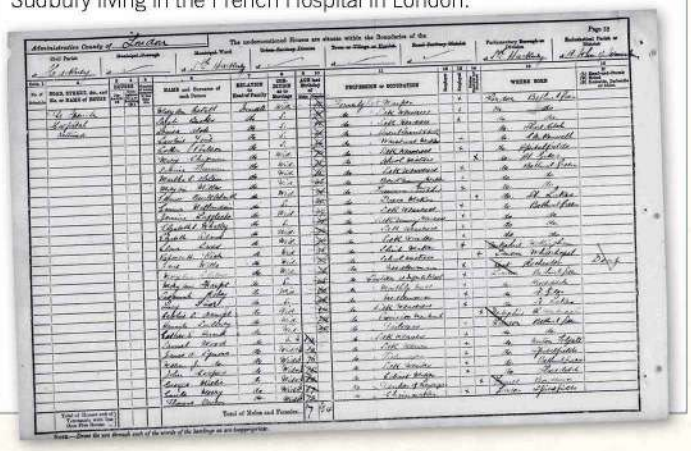
5 Search Census Returns

Census returns taken every 10 years since 1841 and available until 1921 provide the name, age and occupation of each person at an address. They are on all the major genealogy sites, with some free indexes on FreeCEN (**www.freecen.org.uk**) and FamilySearch. Scottish census images are only on ScotlandsPeople, which also has exclusive access to the 1921 census for Scotland; Findmypast has exclusive access to the 1921 census for England and Wales. Except for 1841, place of birth and relationship to the head of the household are recorded.

The 1911 census was written in the householder's handwriting and reveals how long a couple had been married, how many children they had had and how many had died, while the 1921 census provides the name and address of your relation's employer. In actor Sir Derek Jacobi's 2015 episode an 1891 return *(below)* was a stepping stone to proving his descent from French Huguenots, after we found his great grandmother Salome Laplain's aunt Hannah Sudbury living in the French Hospital in London.



Theatre legend Sir Derek Jacobi starred in *WDYTYA?* in 2015



Dame Esther Rantzen and forebear Kate Leverson's entry in the probate calendar

1893.

LEVERSON Kate Leverson of 3 Hyde Park Mansions Middlesex widow died 21 February 1893 Probate Manchester 31 March to Henry Leverson solicitor

LEVERSON Kate Leverson of 3 Hyde Park Mansions Middlesex widow died 21 February 1893 Probate Manchester 31 March to Henry Leverson solicitor

6 Identify Any Wills

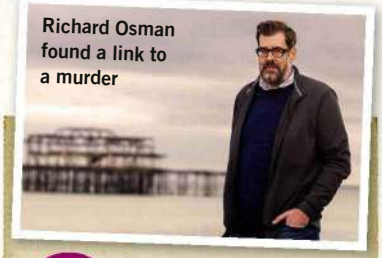
Wills will name immediate family, and extended family too if you're lucky. In presenter Dame Esther Rantzen's 2008 episode her great grandmother Kate Leverson's will and 1893 probate documents even revealed that she died in Germany in 1891. Wills proved in civil probate registries in England and Wales after 1858 are on the site Find A Will (**probatesearch.service.gov.uk**); before then ecclesiastical courts administered probate. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury was the highest court, and wills processed there are on TheGenealogist, Findmypast, Ancestry and TNA. Probate records and indexes from some lesser church courts are on Findmypast and Ancestry, and also consult indexes of wills in local archives. Wills proved in the Welsh ecclesiastical courts can be found at **www.library.wales/catalogues-searching/catalogues/specialist-catalogues/wills**.

Wills and testaments dealt with by Scottish courts between 1513 and 1925 are available on ScotlandsPeople. For later records, visit the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh (**tinyurl.com/nrs-visit-room**).

7 Look For Military Records

Where service records survive, they can be as useful for biographical information – such as names and addresses of next of kin, dependants' dates of birth, and details of marriages – as for plotting a forebear's movements during conflicts. TNA has guides at **nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research** to records of those who served in or alongside the Army, Navy and Royal Air Force. Many are on Forces War Records (**uk.forceswarrecords.com**), Findmypast and Ancestry, and some can be downloaded via Discovery. Museum collections too can improve your understanding of your relative's experience. In 2023 comedian Chris Ramsey visited the Imperial War Museum in London (**iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-london**) to learn about a photograph of the ruins of Nagasaki from the Second World War left by his Royal Navy grandfather Alf Lawson.

Chris Ramsey investigated a photo of Nagasaki after the bombing of 9 August 1945



Richard Osman found a link to a murder

8 Search Historic Newspapers

Newspapers usually offer the most unexpected storylines in *WDYTYA?* – in 2023 composer Andrew Lloyd Webber's Magito ancestors turned out to be showpeople, while in a 2022 episode presenter and novelist Richard Osman's 4x great grandfather Gabriel Gillam reportedly found a murder victim. More than 82 million pages are online at the British Newspaper Archive (**britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**), and many libraries offer members free access to some Gale resources (**gale.com**) such as *The Times'* Digital Archive and British Library Newspapers.

Also, it's always worth running ancestors' names through the free archive of the *Gazette* (**thegazette.co.uk**) for notices of bankruptcy, official name changes, military awards and promotions, and other items of public record.

If your forebears lived in Wales then the National Library of Wales' website **newspapers.library.wales** is a fantastic free treasure trove of articles in both English and Welsh covering 1804–1919. In 2017 this was where we found an obituary for comedian and actor Greg Davies' ancestor claiming descent from Owain Gwynedd, the first Prince of Wales.

THE LATE MURDER AT BRIGHTON.

(Abridged from the *Brighton Herald* of Saturday.)

RE-EXAMINATION OF ANN KENNETT.

The final examination of this wretched woman took place at the Sea House Hotel, on Thursday, before Sir DAVID SCOTT, Bart., S. T. MILFORD, W. SEYMOUR, and W. S. FULLER, Esqrs.

At eleven o'clock *Kennett* was placed in a chair before the Bench, weeping bitterly. She was, on the whole, improved in appearance since the last hearing, being fresher and more ruddy, and her apparel was remarkably clean. On this occasion she wore no bonnet, but a neat lace cap. The prisoner having, after the lapse of a few minutes, become more calm, Mr. Colbatch, the Magistrates' clerk, proceeded to read over the depositions taken at the last sitting.

The depositions of David Mascall, Gabriel Gillam, Wm. Elphick, W. Healy, Charles Orchard, G. A. Greenwood, and George Nye, were read over without inducing any remark from the prisoner.

Elphick, in reply to a question from the Bench, said that, on removing the corpse of Celia Holloway from the grave in the shaw, he saw no appearance of blood on either the stays or shift. The latter, he stated, adhered closely to the body, which was so much decomposed that the skin came off with the garment, and, had there been marks of blood on it, it would have been next to impossible to have recognised them as such.

The deposition of Chief-officer Pilbeam, which related to the finding of the baby-linen, &c., in the prisoner's apartment, being about to be read, the Magistrates' clerk drew the attention of the prisoner to it, as more immediately affecting her.

The prisoner thanked him, and said she would attend.

The only remark made by the prisoner on the evidence was similar to that given last week. She still maintained that the baby's cap, shoes, and a piece of edging, were given her by Holloway, who, she said, brought them home one evening, and threw them into her lap, saying that "she might have them."

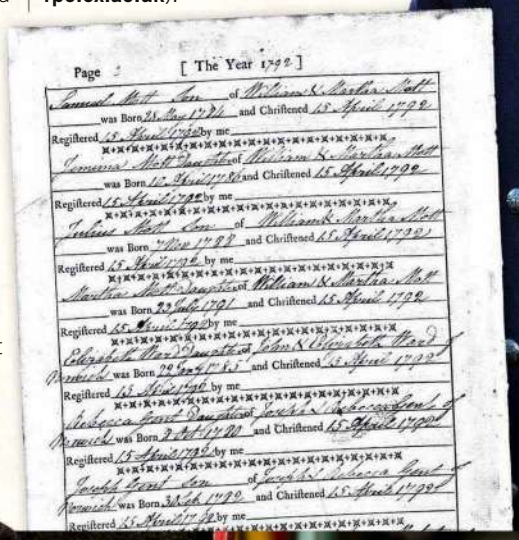
A newspaper revealed that Gabriel Gillam had found a murder victim

9 Check Parish Registers

We have to rely on church registers documenting baptisms, marriages and burials to push a family tree beyond the period of civil registration and census returns. Scotland has a good collection digitised in one place at ScotlandsPeople, and surviving Anglican registers from Wales can be searched on Findmypast, Ancestry or TheGenealogist. However, English records are more dispersed and not so thoroughly available online. Some county archives have teamed up with either Ancestry or Findmypast to digitise holdings, and others like Essex Record Office (**essexarchivesonline.co.uk/ParishRegisters.aspx**) have their own digital system, but some regions currently have very little online coverage.

Even if a county archive does have a contract with a subscription website it doesn't always mean that all records have been digitised, so a trip to the archive for the county where your ancestors lived could be worthwhile once you get back to the early 19th century and beyond.

If you can't find your family in the local Anglican parish registers, perhaps they will appear in nonconformist chapel records, like journalist Sophie Raworth's Baptist ancestors in her 2017 episode. Some of these are also online at TheGenealogist, Findmypast and Ancestry, but others are only available in local archives or specialist repositories like the Library of the Society of Friends in London (**quaker.org.uk/resources/library**) and the Baptist-focused Angus Library and Archive in Oxford (**theangus.rpc.ox.ac.uk**).


Page [The Year 1792]

Samuel Mott Son of William & Martha Mott
was Born 28 May 1792 and Chriftened 15 April 1792
Registered 15 April 1792 by me
Jemima Mott Daughter of William & Martha Mott
was Born 12 January 1792 and Chriftened 15 April 1792
Registered 15 April 1792 by me
Julius Mott Son of William & Martha Mott
was Born 7 Mar 1792 and Chriftened 15 April 1792
Registered 15 April 1792 by me
Martha Mott Daughter of William & Martha Mott
was Born 22 July 1791 and Chriftened 15 April 1792
Registered 15 April 1792 by me
Elizabeth Ann Daughter of John & Elizabeth Ward
was Born 29 Dec 1785 and Chriftened 15 April 1792
Registered 15 April 1792 by me
Rebecca Gant Daughter of Jacob & Rebecca Gant
was Born 2 Feb 1790 and Chriftened 15 April 1792
Registered 15 April 1792 by me
Jacob Gant Son of Jacob & Rebecca Gant
was Born 3 Feb 1790 and Chriftened 15 April 1792
Registered 15 April 1792 by me

Sophie Raworth's ancestor Samuel Mott was born to Baptist parents

387. EDWARD SLADE and CAROLINE PLUNKETT, Robbery on Ann Bloomer, and stealing a pocket handkerchief and 6s. 6d., her money.

MR. WOOD *conducted the Prosecution.*

HENRY BLOOMER. I am a labourer, of Hamilton Road, Norwood—on Saturday night, 22nd March, between 12 and 1 o'clock, my wife and I were going home, when three men and a woman stopped us, and the prisoner asked me what I wanted with the woman—I said, "She is my wife"—he then knocked her down with his banjo—I asked him what he meant by it—then he knocked me down—the young woman pitched into my missis, and scratched her—I cried for help, and the policeman came and took the two prisoners—I heard one of them say, "Knock them down, they have got plenty of money"—that was at the time my wife was knocked down.

Slade. Q. How was I dressed? A. You had a black comforter, and a high hat; you also had a wig—we were not quarrelling—my wife did not miss her money till you were locked up.

ANN BLOOMER. I am the wife of the last witness—we were walking quietly together home, along the Gipsy Road—the prisoner pulled me away from my husband, and knocked me down with the handle of his banjo—I am now under the doctor's hands, in consequence of the violence received—the young woman took hold of my hair, and held me down—I heard one of them say, "They have got money, I know"—then someone said, "Come on, here's the *Bobby*," and then they ran away, and the policeman came up—I had two florins, sixpence, and about twopence halfpenny in copper, safe about two minutes before—when the violence began, I let go my hand; I did not think of the money afterwards, I was so afraid.

Proceedings from the Old Bailey mentioned Paul Merton's forebear Caroline Plunkett

10 Nail Down The Details

Once you've got the basic nuts and bolts of your family tree in good shape then it's time to search for the finer details. Electoral registers show where voters lived in between censuses, and you might also find ancestors in land-tax records and poll books prior to the earliest census. TheGenealogist has a good collection of street and trade directories, as well as tithe and Valuation Office maps linked to survey books that help to pinpoint some relations' residences from the 1830s to the 1910s.

In 2019 a combination of criminal and workhouse records painted a colourful picture of comedian Paul Merton's great great grandmother Caroline Plunkett, who was a vocalist implicated in attacking a woman with a banjo. Many criminal registers, workhouse records and occupational sources like Merchant Navy records will be found on Findmypast, and there's good coverage of workhouse records there and on Ancestry. Try to seek out specialist regional websites too, like London Lives (**londonlives.org**).

The carnage following an accident on 10 September 1874 in which two trains collided at Thorpe St Andrew, Norfolk

Blood on the Tracks

Mike Esbester of the Railway Work, Life & Death project explains how to find out if, like Rose Ayling-Ellis, you have an ancestor who was injured on the railways

At the inquest into railway worker Ada Davies' death, her blind son Daniel Davies testified, "I heard the sound of the train… the crash came… I shouted to her and had no answer."

Ada, 59, was killed at the Castle Pygyn Level Crossing, Carmarthenshire, South-West Wales, on 20 March 1922 while working as a gatekeeper, opening and closing gates to keep road and rail traffic apart. At 9pm a train approached, but it "ran through the gate, and Mrs Davies was fatally injured".

In 1922 alone 240 railway workers died, and 15,968 were injured. Given how dangerous railway work could be, and how many people have worked on the railways during the past two centuries, you may well have had an ancestor who was affected.

Accidents involving passengers are rare but spectacular incidents that tend to dominate interest, at the time and from historians later. They brought industrial dangers, usually only faced by the working classes, into the experience of all.

Passenger crashes affected fewer people than accidents involving workers. In 1876, for example, 144 people died in passenger-train crashes, and 1,957 were injured. By contrast, 696 railway employees were killed at work, and 3,872 were injured. Worker accidents went largely unnoticed.

Women worked on the railways from the outset, albeit in much smaller numbers than men. By 1914, about 14,000 women and 625,000 men worked on the railways. Women were given roles deemed 'appropriate' – often seen as less physically demanding, or less skilled. This includes roles like the one Ada had, a gatekeeper, as well as cleaners, seamstresses and staffing hotels. These roles were often focused in safer environments, where injuries were less common – and less serious when they did happen.

However, some roles, like carriage cleaners or gatekeepers, took railwaywomen into a very dangerous environment: the tracks. Here there were more serious accidents, including fatalities like Ada's. Gradually, the range of women's roles increased, particularly during national emergencies like the world wars. They took on jobs like engine cleaners, goods porters and ticket collectors, often temporarily. Those duties exposed them to more dangers.

Men Under Pressure

Men's roles were often more physically onerous – working the trains; maintaining the tracks; building the engines, carriages and wagons, and the like. The more manual aspects were often accompanied by great danger, including hot metal splashes in foundries (because the bigger companies had their own workshops), crushes between wagons, and the risk of being run over while repairing the track.

For much of the 19th and ▶

Find Your Railway Worker Ancestors

Mike reveals the essential sources for researching railway workers

Ancestry

w **ancestry.co.uk**

Ancestry has digitised employment registers for English and Welsh railway companies held by The National Archives in Kew, and the surviving Irish employment registers and accident books held by the Irish Railway Record Society.

Findmypast

w **bit.ly/fmp-trad**

Findmypast's collection 'Britain, Trade Union Membership Registers' contains more than 3.7 million records, including from the ASRS/NUR.

Locomotion / National Railway Museum

w **locomotion.org.uk / railwaymuseum.org.uk**

Between them Locomotion in Shildon and sister museum the National Railway Museum in York have the most extensive collection of railway history objects and archives to be found anywhere in the world.

Modern Records Centre (MRC)

w **warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/**

The ASRS/NUR is one of the trade unions whose material is in the MRC at the University of Warwick. This includes the *Railway Review* newspaper (some editions are online on the MRC's website) and membership registers.

National Records Of Scotland (NRS)

w **nrscotland.gov.uk**

NRS holds staff registers and accident records for Scottish railway firms (not digitised), and Fatal Accident Inquiry records available online at Old Scottish (see the 'Resources' box).

Railway Work, Life & Death Project

w **railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk**

This site includes a database of pre-1939 British and Irish railway worker accidents, resources about railway work, and a blog that welcomes contributions from family historians.

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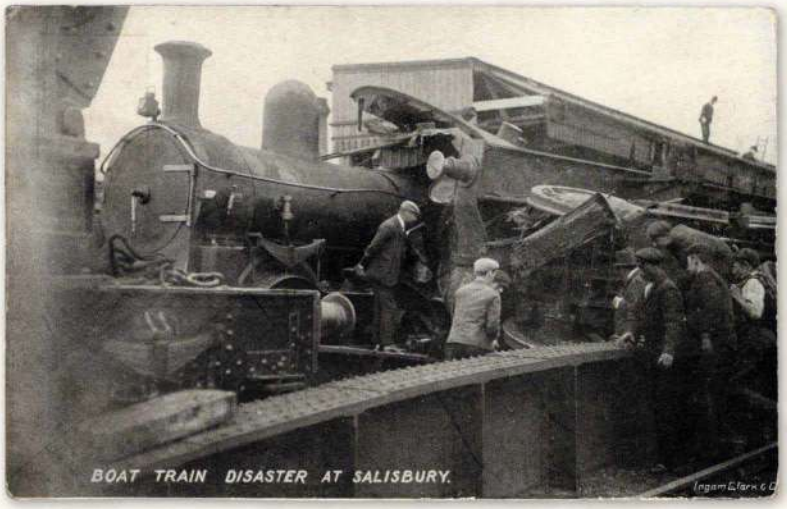
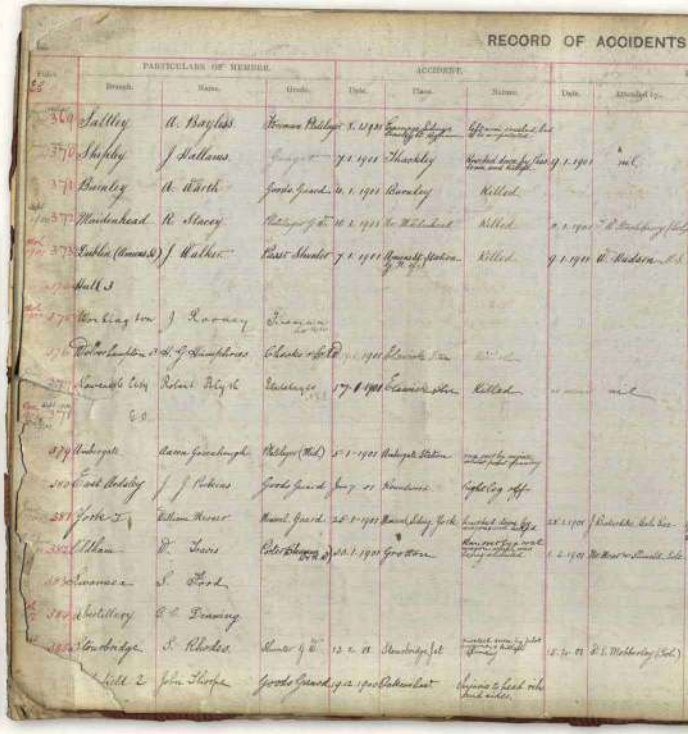




Passenger crashes, such as this one in Salisbury on 1 July 1906, were popular subjects of disaster postcards in the early 20th century

20th centuries, worker accidents were seen by the state, industry and society alike as inevitable. There was little push for improvements, except from trade unions. As a result, in 1913 nearly 30,000 people were injured or killed at work on Britain and Ireland's railways.

Staff working among moving trains featured frequently. They might be shunters – men who coupled and uncoupled wagons and carriages. On 16 June 1909, 18-year-old Arthur Wedlock, a shunter for the South Wales firm Rhymney Railway, was knocked down by an engine while coupling wagons near Caerphilly. He survived, but lost both his legs. As often happened after a life-changing disability, the railway company found him alternative employment, as a clerk.

Track workers were particularly vulnerable. Working in gangs, they had to do their work and watch for approaching trains, moving out of the way when necessary. If something went wrong, it did so dramatically. At Watford Junction in Hertfordshire five track workers were killed and two injured on 9 November 1932 when they were hit by a train.

Drivers and firemen might have to maintain their engines while moving, meaning they could fall from their train, or be struck by passing objects. This happened to fireman R Salmon at Athlone, Central Ireland, on 12 January 1912. He had been in the engine's tender, preparing coal to shovel into the fire; his head was hit and injured by an overhead girder.

Staff who were handling goods traffic were exposed to dangerous situations. Liquid chlorine escaped from a cylinder placed in a goods wagon at Crewe in Cheshire on 15 December 1938, and poisoned 19 men. The vast majority of injuries were less serious, resulting from slips, trips and falls. Even so, this represented a vast annual toll, sometimes with profound human costs.

Accident Records

Three main types of record help us understand railway work and staff accidents. First, Railway Inspectorate reports (1900–1939) focus on the accident itself, and are brief – usually up to half a page in length. They give important detail about what occurred, who was involved and why an accident happened. However, they only cover a fraction of the countless staff accidents: just 3 per cent.

Second, there are records from the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS). This trade union was founded in 1871, and in 1913 merged with the

James Welland

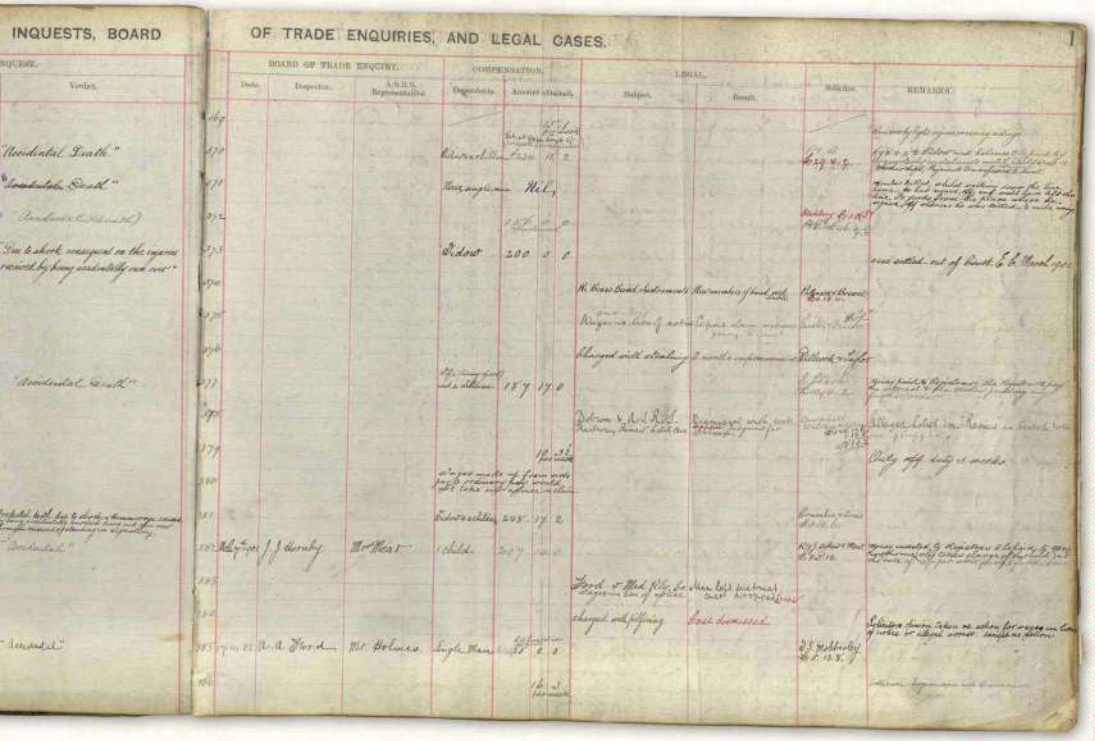
Mike shares the story of an injured railway worker featured in Rose Ayling-Ellis' episode of *Who Do You Think You Are?*

James is wearing one black glove in this old family photo

The family of former *EastEnders* actor Rose Ayling-Ellis had always wondered about the photo of her paternal great great grandfather James Welland wearing a black glove on one hand. There were rumours of a railway accident.

They turned out to be based in fact. James did have an accident, on the Great Western Railway (GWR) at Tiverton Junction, Devon, in 1898. His accident occurred within days of joining the railway as a temporary porter. He was sent to change some oil lamps, used to illuminate a signal at track level, only to be struck from behind by a slow-moving goods train. He reached out and his left hand was crushed under the engine's wheel. It was later amputated.

James was one of 12,979 injuries that year, and fortunate not to have been among the 542 fatalities. The GWR paid the minimum under the 1897 Workmen's Compensation Act, 7s 6d per week (about £30 today). James took the firm to court for more, including a lump sum, but doesn't seem to have been successful. His accident was the end of his time on the railways. The GWR is known to have made prostheses for injured staff, so may have provided him with an artificial hand.

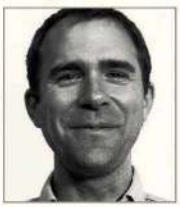


Entries in an ASRS register of post-accident compensation secured for its members in 1901

United Pointsmen and Signalmen's Society and the General Railway Workers' Union to create the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR; now the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, better known as the RMT). The ASRS advocated for safety, provided representation at inquests, and gave financial support to injured members or their dependents. Records exist from the mid-1870s until mid-1921. Although typically brief, they give valuable insight into the effects of an accident on railway workers and their families.

Finally, railway companies kept details of staff hurt at work. Most surviving documents cover the period after the introduction of compensation with the 1897 Workmen's Compensation Act (WCA). Companies wanted a record of who was receiving what. They tend to document the company's view of the causes of an accident – sometimes at odds with the state or union views!

Before the WCA, staff were unlikely to receive compensation. The Act effectively made compensation automatic in the railway industry, and four other major sectors. Death at work could see employers providing £150–300 to dependents (approximately £11,700–23,400 today). Compensation for injury depended upon severity, length of time off work, and existing rate of pay. After two weeks off work, staff could receive half pay, to a maximum of £1 per week. If they were still receiving compensation after six months, it was possible for the employer to negotiate a lump-sum payment in lieu of continued outlay.



Mike Esbester is principal lecturer in history at the University of Portsmouth and co-lead of the Railway Work, Life & Death project (**railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk**)

Accessing The Data

The Railway Work, Life & Death project (**railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk**) was set up to make information in the records more easily available to researchers via a database. It is a collaboration between the University of Portsmouth, the National Railway Museum in York and the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick. It also works with The National Archives at Kew and the RMT. Small teams of volunteers, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude, have been transcribing the records. This includes readers of *WDYTYA? Magazine*, who in 2019 transcribed more than 2,100 entries in an ASRS register.

The database is in the form of a spreadsheet that can be downloaded for free from **railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk/the-accidents/**. It currently contains about 48,000 transcriptions, with at least 70,000 records to come. The website features other resources contextualising railway work and railway staff accidents, including a regular blog often written by family historians who find railway accidents in their past.

As the 20th century progressed, railway safety and railway work altered. Transport and society changed; the network contracted, was nationalised and later re-privatised. The numbers of workers decreased. It was increasingly seen as unacceptable for so many people to be hurt at work, and changes in technology, practices and safety culture led to dramatic improvements. Between April 2022 and March 2023 there were two worker fatalities and 83 serious injuries – still far too many, of course, but a fraction of the annual tolls whose records can be explored in our database.

Resources

More recommendations to uncover the experiences of railway workers

BOOKS

Railwaywomen
Helena Wojtczak
Hastings, 2005
The only detailed look at female railway workers during the 19th and 20th centuries was written by a former railway worker.

Tracing Your Railway Ancestors
Di Drummond
Pen & Sword, 2010
This book explaining railway history and research for family historians is a very helpful guide.

WEBSITES

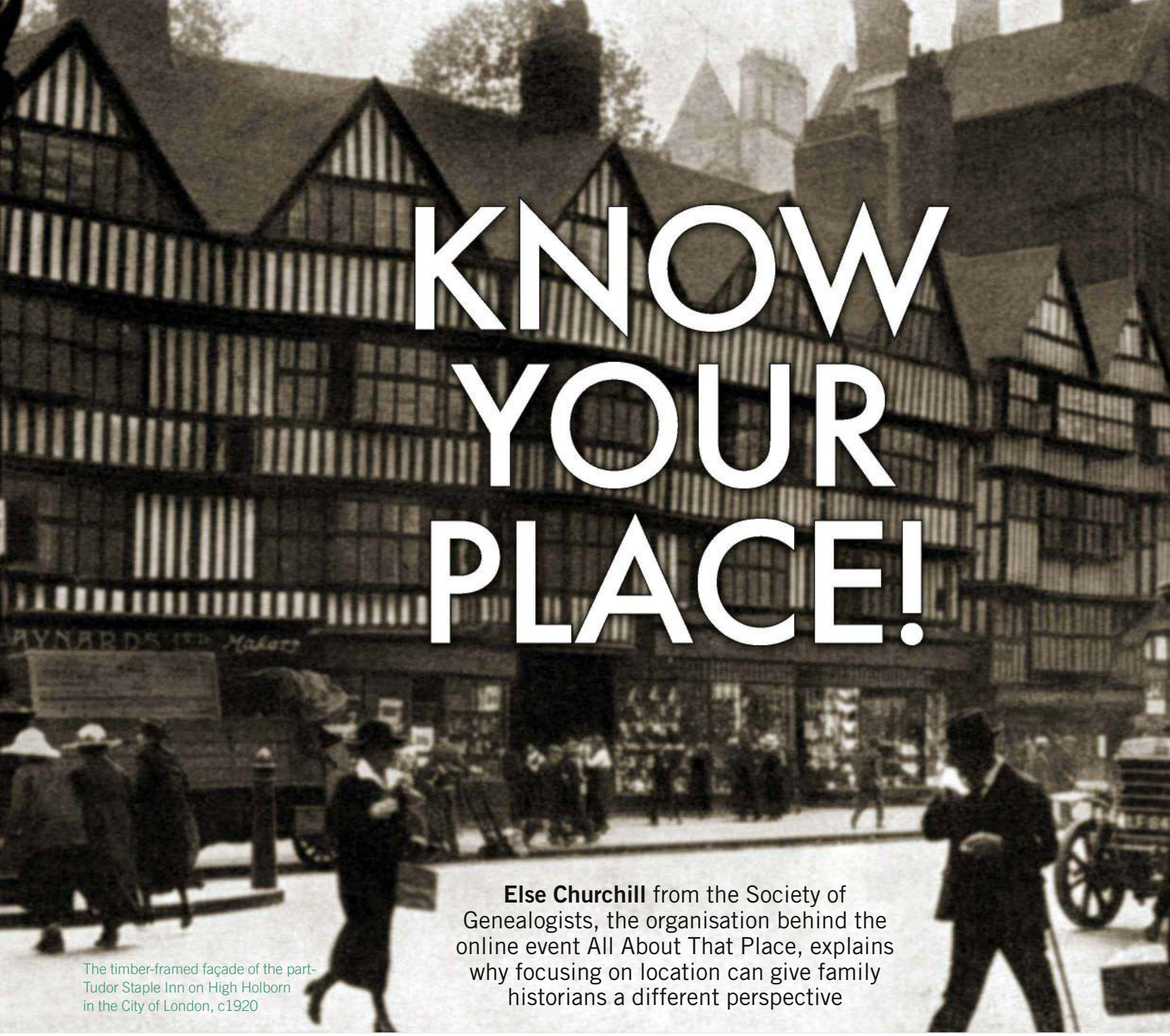
BRITISH NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE
w **britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**
Reports in local newspapers are often the only surviving records of railway workers' accidents.

OLD SCOTTISH
w **oldscottish.com**
If your railway ancestor was Scottish, here you can find indexes to Scottish Workmen's Compensation Act records. The website is also indexing Fatal Accident Inquiry records from the railways and more, and you can order copies of full records.

RAILWAYS ARCHIVE
w **railwaysarchive.co.uk/eventlisting.php**
You can search reports of passenger train crashes from 1840 to the present here, focusing on technical detail (they don't name casualties).

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
w **tinyurl.com/tna-guide-rail**
TNA has created a guide to finding records relating to railway workers, particularly those held at Kew.

MODERN RECORDS CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK (MSS.127/AS/1/1/38)



KNOW YOUR PLACE!

Else Churchill from the Society of Genealogists, the organisation behind the online event All About That Place, explains why focusing on location can give family historians a different perspective

The timber-framed façade of the part-Tudor Staple Inn on High Holborn in the City of London, c1920

Success in family history relies on being clear about who you are looking for, what you wish to find, when your ancestors lived – and, importantly, *where* they lived. Many key records are centred on place, from census returns to parish registers. So the geography of your ancestors' lives is not only an important part of their story, but can lead you to new documents that reveal priceless information.

All About That Place (#AATP24) is a local and family history event, taking place from 27 September to 6 October. This is a unique collaboration hosted online by the Society of Genealogists (**sog.org.uk**), the Society for One-Place Studies (**one-place-studies.org**), the British Association for Local History (**balh.org.uk**) and Genealogy Stories (**genealogystories.co.uk**). Across the 10 days, more than 140 bite-sized 10-minute talks will be streamed on Facebook (**facebook.com**) and YouTube (**youtube.com**), explaining how to put your forebears into the context of the times they lived, and the locations they called home.

Here are six expert tips that will help you put your ancestors in their place.

1 HUNT DOWN LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS

A published local history will help you understand a place, its roads, its markets and its employment opportunities. It might chart the development of the town or village, revealing the names of the manors and the local landowners. What happened there during the Civil War? Were the fields enclosed? What was the community like before the Reformation? When did industry come to the area?

Most counties have quite early and detailed histories published in the 18th or 19th centuries, compiled by distinguished scholars. Older county histories can often be found free online, or in libraries. The Victoria History of the Counties of England, commonly known as the Victoria County History (VCH), began in 1899 and continues to produce volumes under the guidance of the Institute of Historical Research (**history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history**).

2 MAP A PLACE THROUGH TIME

Look at all of the maps you can find for the place you are researching, from early antiquarian maps to detailed Ordnance Surveys. They will reflect the growth of a community, and show how the roads and communications developed or parish boundaries changed. You may see how the coming of the turnpikes, canals and railways affected

GETTY IMAGES

the area, and how the routes to markets offered opportunities to meet, trade and find jobs. Maps were often made for specific purposes, such as insurance companies noting the buildings and businesses they insure, or to identify the properties leased on the estate. Many can now be found online through the National Library of Scotland (**maps.nls.uk**) and other local initiatives. You can often overlay digitised maps from different periods, so it will be easy to see how an area has changed.

3 FIND BUSINESS RECORDS IN DIRECTORIES

Local city and county directories listing merchants and businesspeople from the middle of the 18th century gradually became more comprehensive throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. A run of directories may show changes in the name of a business, its address and activities, the dissolution of a partnership or a bankruptcy, any of which may suggest a search in the *London Gazette* (**thegazette.co.uk**). An advert in a directory may give more detail about the business, sometimes picturing the premises or examples of its products. Directories also often list the carriers and coaching routes, indicating how someone might travel from place to place.

Large collections of directories from archives and libraries are on commercial websites. You can also access a great many from England and Wales via the free site Special Collections Online (**tinyurl.com/sci-dir**).

4 LOOK FOR LAND OWNERSHIP AND TENANCIES

Owning and renting land usually inferred privileges and incurred responsibilities. If an ancestor is mentioned in a directory then he may have been eligible to vote, and listed in early poll books or electoral rolls. He (and occasionally she) may be a rate payer paying the parish poor rates, or local land and window taxes. He may be obliged to serve on a local jury. He may be a farmer with several acres, employing farm servants and agricultural labourers. He may be the local lord of the manor or his steward presiding over the manorial courts. All of these interactions with the local community generated records and stories worth investigating.

Houses in Ruston's Place, Bellar Gate, Caunts Yard, Nottingham, photographed 28 May 1919

GETTY IMAGES

5 UNDERSTAND THE POOR LAW AND SETTLEMENT RULES

Under the old Tudor Poor Laws and the New Poor Law from 1834 the parish played a key role in supporting the poor, and the Poor Laws tied people to a parish through settlement. For most people, this was the parish they were born in, but you could also qualify for settlement if you had served an apprenticeship or worked in a parish for a qualifying period, or rented property to a sufficient value. Having a settlement certificate would reassure the parish overseers that you could be removed to your parish of settlement if you became a burden. Settlement and removal orders generate lots of records. Parish disputes about who was legally settled were overseen by local justices of the peace. Gradually parishes could combine to build workhouses and form unions administered by a local board of guardians. The magnificent site The Workhouse (**workhouses.org.uk**) is the best place to look for local information, and some settlement records are gradually being added to the main commercial websites.

6 SEARCH FOR LOCAL RECORDS ONLINE

Many local records are now making their way online via the main subscription websites and the free site FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**). The Society of Genealogists also has copies and transcripts of records from local archives (search its catalogue SoGCAT at **tinyurl.com/sog-cat**). In addition, local history and family history societies often have useful indexes on their websites or available to buy, and record offices are increasingly putting their own indexes online. Look out for name-rich resources associated with the place your ancestors lived. Searching by location instead of by name can lead you down new paths towards new discoveries.

FIND OUT MORE

ALL ABOUT THAT PLACE

w **subscribepage.com/allaboutthatplace**

Sign up today to receive email newsletters with all of the details about how to join this free event, plus the latest updates. You can also jump into the Facebook Group (**facebook.com/groups/allaboutthatplace**) to chat with experts and fellow viewers, and put your learning into action by downloading the accompanying challenge workbook. There's also a fringe event, a 'Pacific Edition' that sees the volunteer-led Projectkin community (**projectkin.org**) hosting a series of longer talks that start at midnight UK time. This ensures that anyone based in Australia or the West Coast of the USA can take part too.

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WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?®

'George Was A Secret Agent In Egypt In WW1

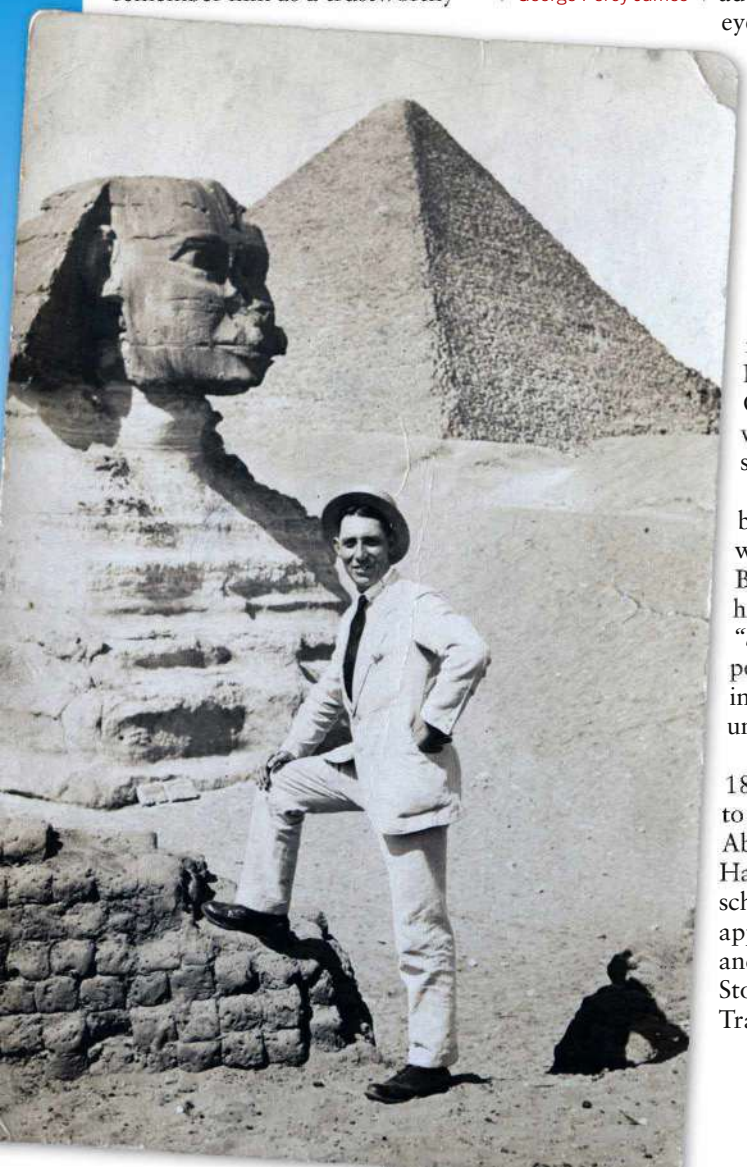
CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

A collection of medals, postcards and documents has enabled Ash James to uncover his grandfather's military service as an intelligence operative in Cairo. By **Gail Dixon**

As a child, Ash James was intrigued by the family rumour that his grandfather George had caught a spy: "A thousand and one British children were probably told the same after the world wars, but now I wonder if there was some truth in the legend.

"Grandfather's name was George Percy James, and I remember him as a trustworthy person and a gentleman. He was always very well dressed and smart. He didn't roll around on the floor with my brother David and me or play football, as we would have liked. In fact, we kept our distance because we respected him as a former police officer. What I've learnt of his life in adulthood has really opened my eyes to George."

I remember George as a gentleman. He was always very well dressed and smart



Ash's grandfather George Percy James

Ash is a retired deputy headteacher who lives in Stourbridge in the West Midlands. "During the spring lockdown of 2020 I decided to look through genealogy materials left by my dad."

This was a box of letters, postcards and documents - a 'time capsule' of memorabilia relating to Egypt during the First World War. One was a Cairo tram pass dated 1919, which had a photo of George standing next to the Sphinx.

The wording was in French, because the transport network was run by a French-speaking Belgian company, and it listed him as Lance Corporal G James, *"agent secret"*. How had a police officer from a village in Worcestershire become an undercover operative in Egypt?

George was born on 26 June 1882 in Lichfield, Staffordshire, to coal merchant and innkeeper Abraham James and his wife Harriet Enderby. After leaving school, George began an apprenticeship in an iron foundry and later worked for the Dudley, Stourbridge and District Electric Tramways Company.

In 1904, he joined the Worcestershire Constabulary (now part of West Mercia Police) in a probationary position at King's Norton, Birmingham. "George's police service record gave me a precise timeline of his career.

"The family was quite poor and only averagely educated, so it's amazing that he was accepted into the police. It was a good career for a young man to embark on."

George married Evelyn Brant and they went on to have eight children, including Ash's dad Ralph in 1915. In 1908, the family moved to Kempsey, Worcestershire, where George became the village constable.

From Civilian To Soldier

After the First World War broke out, George signed up for the Regular Reserve of the British Army and in 1916 enlisted in the 6th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment. Aged 33 at the time, he would have been one of the older enlistees. He was appointed acting lance corporal and assigned to the Military Foot Police, undertaking training in Plymouth, Devon. His regiment was destined for service in Africa.

In 1914, following the outbreak of war with the Ottoman Empire, Britain declared a protectorate over Egypt and established a task force that would become known as the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. The Suez Canal, Britain's key artery to the East, had been attacked by both Germany and the Ottomans, and it was vital that it was protected.

George made his way across the Mediterranean on the ▶

UNP/MARK RADFORD

Ash James with *(inset)* Mr Moussabin's letter and other documents that shed light on his grandfather's career

Ash James' Family Tree

- Abraham James 1837–1893 = Harriet Enderby 1842–1902
  - George Percy James 1882–1974 = Evelyn Brant 1881–1960
    - Ralph Loyal James 1915–2000 = Edna Beatrice Lilian Fulford 1916–1995
      - Ash James
      - David James

troopship SS *Ceramic* at a time when German U-boat operations were increasing to deadly effect. Ash has investigated his career in Egypt extensively, using the primary sources his grandfather left, historical research and regimental records.

"On arrival, George was based at Midan Bab el-Hadid barracks in central Cairo. He and his colleague Corporal Mooney both served in civilian clothes, which was unusual for members of the Military Foot Police.

"Cosmopolitan Cairo must have been a huge culture shock for George, who was used to village life. He patrolled bazaars where the air was filled with the scent of cinnamon, herbs and sweet apple smoke."

The oppressive heat and ever-present flies were a huge burden for the men, some of whom collapsed in the morning sun.

Spat At In The Street

"Soldiers' duties included establishing control, policing crowded areas and checking passes. It was a novelty at first, but the situation soon became tougher. Britain was an occupying force, so inevitably the troops faced resentment from the local population. Some were spat at in the street."

George sent about 70 postcards home to his children from Egypt, and wrote letters to Evelyn.

A map of Cairo from 1920 helped Ash understand his grandfather's movements

"The postcards formed a gallery of Egyptian life, from busy city squares and grand hotels, to yachts sailing on the Nile.

"Grandfather wrote lovingly to his children, which surprised David and me. He was a lovely man, but he was an imposing character to us.

"George reported to the assistant provost marshal for Cairo, the British head of police, although he was still in the Army. Among Grandfather's records, I found a document from the assistant provost marshal, signed by Staff Captain AE Dunstan, dated 22 January 1919. In it, the 'General Officer Commanding' commended George for his work in the 'Sugar Case'.

"I researched life in Cairo at the time, and realised that sugar was a valuable commodity. Apparently, Egyptian people can be quite sweet-toothed. During the war, sugar was disappearing in large quantities from Cairo and people were making money out of inflating its value.

"It's my belief that George tried to discover what was happening, and where the sugar was disappearing to. He travelled around visiting sugar mills on the banks of the Nile on its trail.

"I found George's war medals among the memorabilia and was delighted to discover that one was a Meritorious Service Medal, which George may have been awarded for his work on the 'Sugar Case'. This is an honour given to non-commissioned officers and warrant officers for acts of outstanding courage, valour and service.

"George must have been involved in a high degree of investigation to receive such a prestigious award."

This Worcestershire Constabulary photo from 1931 includes George James *(front row, third from left)*

Licence To Travel

It may also have been a dangerous role, given that sugar was so valuable. This may explain why George's tram pass contained the words *agent secret*, enabling him to move freely around Cairo when undercover on a mission.

"George would have been aware of the Arab Bureau, which was a section of the Cairo Intelligence Department established in 1916 to gather information. TE Lawrence, also

UNP/MARK RADFORD

George James' Meritorious Service Medal, Victory Medal, British War Medal and 1919 Cairo tram pass

known as 'Lawrence of Arabia', was one of its most expert and influential officers. Members of the bureau would have picked the brains of people like George during wartime."

These intriguing discoveries reminded Ash of the family myth that George had captured a spy. "I've yet to discover any more information on this, but Grandfather was clearly no ordinary military policeman and received a prestigious award, so perhaps it was true."

Even when the war ended, the danger didn't cease for George and his comrades. In fact, it increased after an uprising broke out that culminated in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution.

"After years of living under British rule, Egypt wanted independence and this led to threats against service personnel and their local contacts. Armed forces stayed on in the region, although George was allowed to return home in June 1919.

"I found a letter among the memorabilia, which was quite unsettling. It had been written by a Mr Moussabin, a friend and contact of George's who worked in a high position at a bank in Cairo. He may have been a Coptic Christian, and was married with four daughters.

"Mr Moussabin had assisted George as an interpreter, go-between and analyst of Cairo workings. This potentially placed him and his family at great risk during the revolution.

"In his letter of 1919, Mr Moussabin asked George why he had left Cairo in such a hurry, without saying goodbye. He also asked if he would furnish him with a reference.

"I can't find any information regarding the fate of the Moussabins, but I know that recriminations were widespread in Cairo during the revolution. The fact that this letter remained in George's personal archive, with a beautiful picture of the girls, suggests that it was important to him. I'd love to find out what happened to the Moussabins."

It means so much to tell George's story. I feel that I understand him more now

Rejoining The Police Force

After the war ended, George rejoined the police force as a sergeant and in 1922 was transferred to Warley Police Station in the West Midlands. He retired in 1931, after over 26 years in the police, and served the community as a crossing warden. "Grandfather passed away in 1974 at the grand age of 92."

Ash became so captivated by his grandfather's life that he was inspired to write a thriller based on his experiences. *The Poet Laurie Ate* was published in spring this year. The novel's locations include Cairo and the island of Menorca, and it's packed with subterfuge.

"I visited Cairo and became familiar with the sights, sounds and smells of the city. I even researched what would grow in the streets at the time."

"It means so much to tell George's story, and I feel that I understand him more now," Ash reveals. "It's so satisfying when family members who have read the book say, 'He's back – George is back in the room.'"

The Poet Laurie Ate by Ash James is out now (Troubador Publishing, 2024, RRP £10.99)

Resources

These resources were essential for Ash's meticulous research

The Great War Forum

w **greatwarforum.org**

This online community group helped Ash build up a picture of the minutiae of life for armed-service personnel in Egypt. You can research individual soldiers, regiments, uniforms, arms and movements on the site.

Worcestershire Police History 1833–1967

w **sites.google.com/site/worcestershirepolicehistory/**

Ash found his grandfather George James' police service documented in the records of Worcestershire Constabulary. They provided a timeline of his career, and included details such as marital status, religion, level of education and weight.

Worcestershire Regiment

w **worcestershireregiment.com**

This website has a database containing more than 50,000 records of soldiers who served in the First World War. You can also discover more about gallantry awards, assignments and ranks from 1694–1970.

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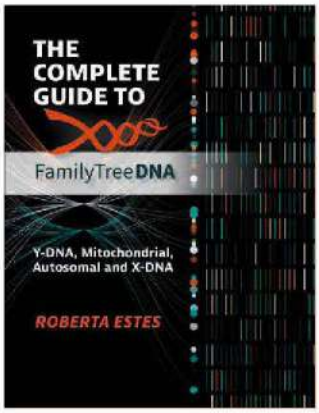
- **X-DNA – Your secret tool that's included with Family Finder**
- **An extensive glossary explaining the vocabulary associated with DNA testing.**



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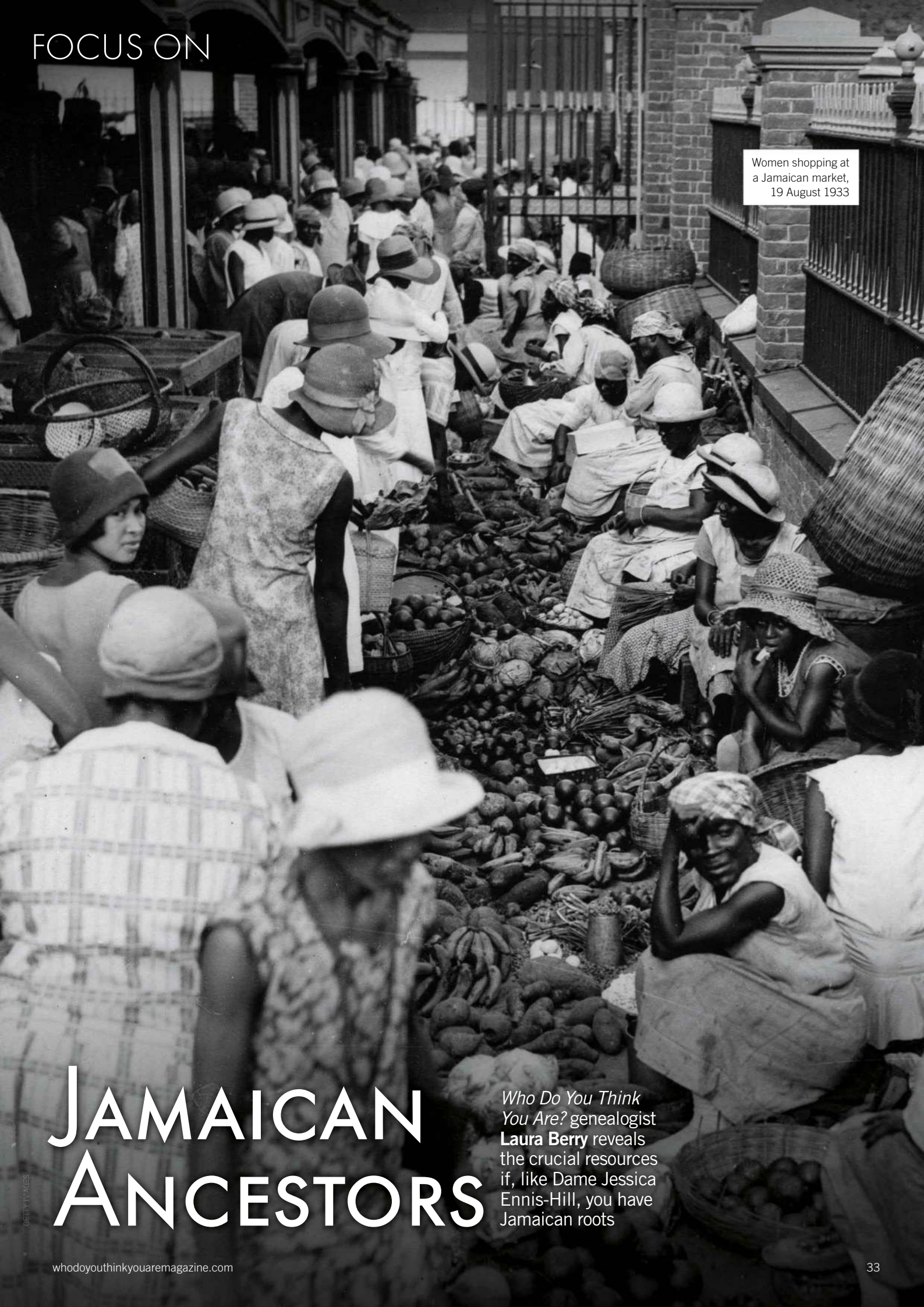


Women shopping at a Jamaican market, 19 August 1933

Jamaican Ancestors

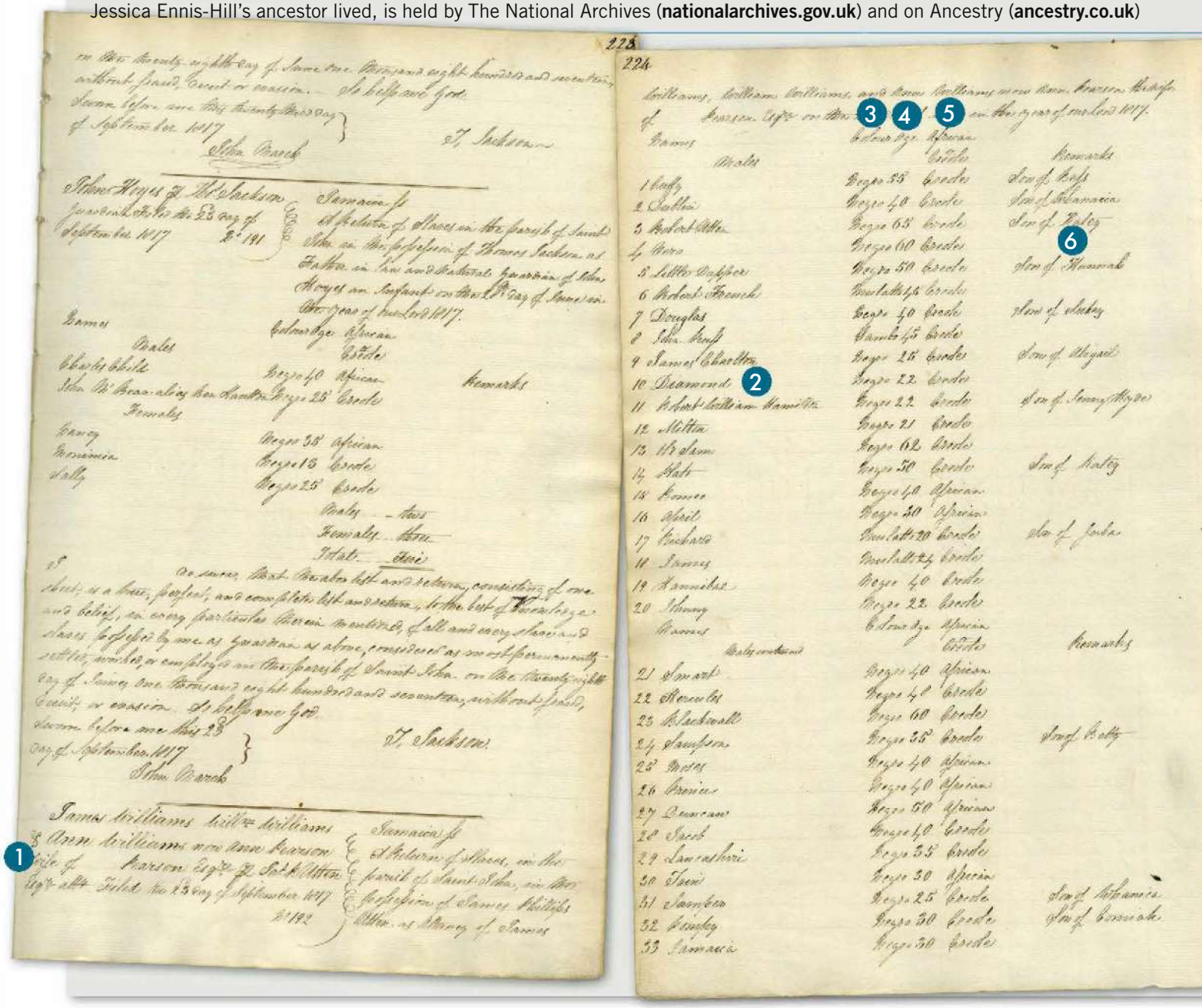
Who Do You Think You Are? genealogist **Laura Berry** reveals the crucial resources if, like Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill, you have Jamaican roots

On 6 August 1962, Jamaica celebrated its first Independence Day since Oliver Cromwell seized the island from Spanish colonists in 1655. Indigenous settlers were largely wiped out after Columbus landed in 1494 and the Spanish began exploiting natural resources and importing enslaved Africans. Some slaves fled into Jamaica's inaccessible interior during the Anglo-Spanish War (1585–1604), establishing new communities with West African cultural identities. They became known as Maroons, and slaves escaping British captors gradually joined them. They proved a formidable fighting force during the First Maroon War against British settlers. Starting in 1728, this ended with peace treaties in 1739–1740 recognising the Maroons' political autonomy, and securing their services capturing future 'runaways'. Records relating to Maroons are at The National Archives in Kew (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**). This includes the 1831 'Returns of the Maroons' transcribed on the Jamaican Family Search website at **www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Samples/Members.htm**, also naming their slaves. For an overview of TNA's material, see *Tracing Your Caribbean Ancestors: A National Archives Guide, 3rd Edition* by Guy Grannum (Bloomsbury, 2012).

Public attitude towards slavery shifted sufficiently

Slave Register, 1817

The first slave registers list every slave on each estate. This example from Water Mount Estate in St John Parish, where Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill's ancestor lived, is held by The National Archives (**nationalarchives.gov.uk**) and on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**)



to persuade the British Parliament to abolish the trade with the passing of the 1807 Slave Trade Act. In practice, this meant that Africans were no longer imported. However, those already enslaved or born in the Caribbean after 1808 to enslaved mothers (known as 'Creoles') were not freed until August 1834 following the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act.

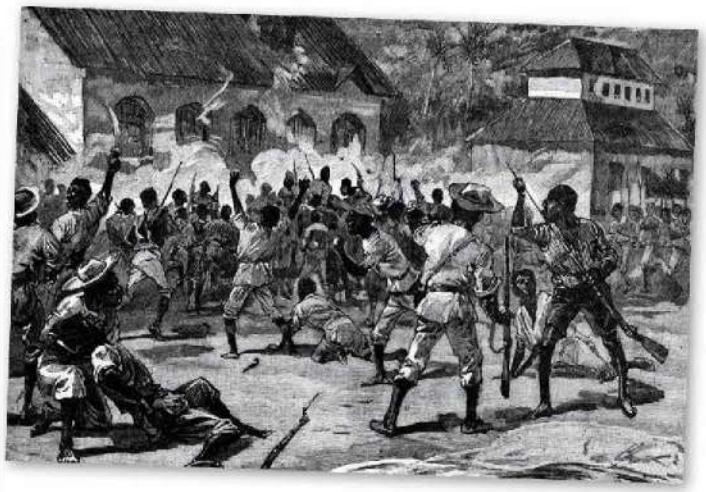
Even then they were bound as indentured labourers under a new 'apprenticeship system' lasting until 1838.

Slave registers introduced in 1817 represented an effort to ensure that no new slaves were imported. The returns of 1817, arranged by parish and then enslaver's surname, list every slave on each estate, their "Colour" (eg negro or mulatto), age and whether they were "African or Creole". Five returns taken every three years thereafter only list those who had died, been born or acquired since the last return. You can search them by slave name or enslaver via Ancestry's freely available collection 'Former British Colonial Dependencies, Slave Registers, 1813–1834' at **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1129**.

Compensation Claims

Enslavers (not their captives) received compensation when slavery ended. The 1834 compensation claims from many estates are in TNA's series T 71, providing additional names of slaves born or acquired since the final 1832 register; see the entry in TNA's catalogue Discovery at **discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C13808**. The Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery at University College London has built a database that acts as a portal to extensive research into estates and plantation owners, often providing claim references for tracing records: **ucl.ac.uk/lbs**.

Slave registers are a partial but valuable snapshot of the early 19th-century population, since censuses are not available at all, except a nominal 1823 census of free people in the parish of Hanover also transcribed at **www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Samples/Members.htm**. This might include people freed by their owners, known as manumission or enfranchisement. A Manumission Index at the Jamaica Archives and



The Morant Bay Rebellion in St Thomas, south-east Jamaica, 11 October 1865

1 Enslavers' Names
Slave owners are named first, sometimes alongside the name of the estate.

2 Slave Names
Slave names like Diamond might be changed later upon baptism to something that sounded more British, like Robert William Hamilton.

3 Colour
Descriptions include "negro", "mulatto" (meaning they had one "negro" parent and one "white" parent) or "sambo" (one "negro" parent and one "mulatto" parent).

4 Age
The ages of older people may be approximated. Note too that the names of any enslaved babies will be listed alongside adults in the slave registers.

5 African Or Creole
"African" referred to slaves who were born in Africa and transported to the Caribbean, whereas "Creole" meant they were born in the Caribbean.

6 Remarks
Mothers' names are sometimes mentioned here, who may be found in the list of female slaves that followed the male list in the registers.

GETTY IMAGES

DID YOU KNOW?

Termites and the tropical climate have damaged Jamaica's archive material, but the British Library has digitised key collections: **eap.bl.uk/project/EAP148**.

Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill

Laura helped to trace the Olympic gold medallist's ancestry

In the latest series of *WDYTYA?*, the athlete flew to Jamaica for the first time with her father to meet his extended family in Linstead, St Catherine Parish. Her paternal grandmother's sister Edna was the oldest surviving relation, and showed Jess a photo of her mother: Jess' great grandmother, Louise White.

A combination of civil birth, marriage and death certificates, found in the FamilySearch collection 'Jamaica, Civil Registration, 1880–1999' (**familysearch.org/search/collection/1538386**), allowed Louise's ancestry to be traced back to Jess' 4x great grandfather George Thomas White, who died in St Catherine in 1879 aged around 90. His son, Jess' 3x great grandfather George McLeod White of Watermount District, registered the death, and the certificate stated that George Thomas White had been a cooper – someone who made barrels.

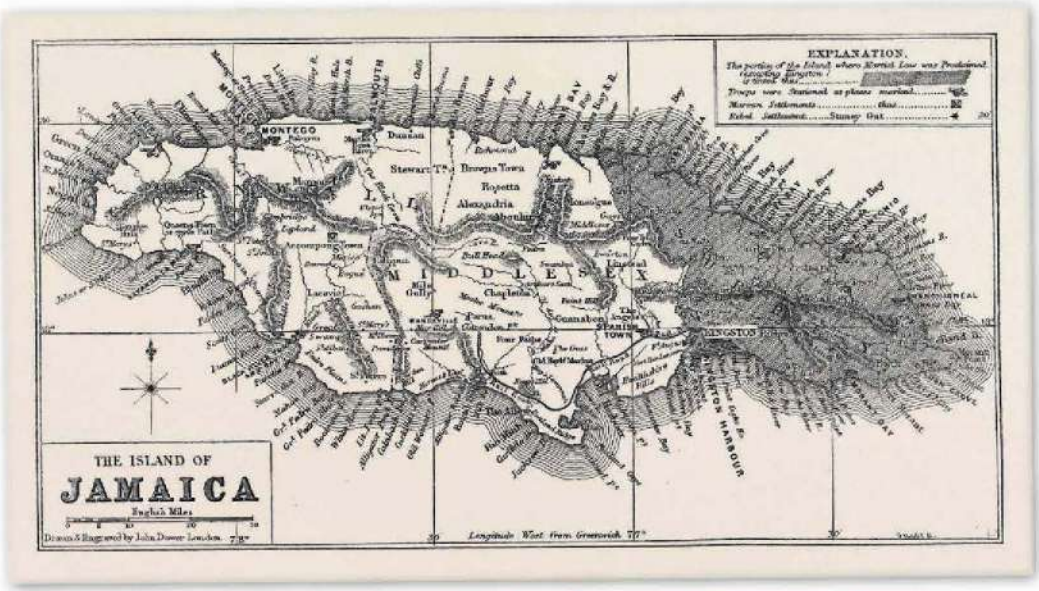
George Thomas White was baptised in 1823 in the Anglican faith as an enslaved adult, and the baptism register on FamilySearch showed that he belonged to the Water Mount Estate (then in St John Parish). The Legacies of British Slavery database (**ucl.ac.uk/lbs**) revealed that this was a sugar plantation owned by James Williams junior. Searching for the estate owner's name in the slave registers on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1129**) led to a list of slaves working on the estate in 1817, where it was evident that prior to his baptism George was likely known by a slave name such as Rainny, Polydore or London, who were all a similar age.

Records Department (JARD; **jard.gov.jm**) is arranged by enslaver's surname, while manumitted slaves who are listed in TNA reference CO 137/162 are indexed at **www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Samples2/slavery.htm** along with other slave lists back to 1754.

The owners of Jamaica's plantations struggled to profit without free labour. Many estates were broken up, and former slaves bought smallholdings. Almanacs from 1751–1875 at **www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Samples/Almanacs.htm** name civil and military officials and landowners, including anyone with 10-plus acres in 1845. Registers of Deeds at the Registrar General's Department in Jamaica (RGD; **rgd.gov.jm**) can help establish when a family plot was acquired. Also it's worth contacting the JARD and the National Library of Jamaica in Kingston (NLJ; **nlj.gov.jm/contact/**) when researching a plot with a specific name, as they hold additional deeds and land records. Indexes to Jamaican wills are at the Island Record Office (part of the RGD), but some from the Supreme Court of Jamaica from 1756–1930 (with gaps) can be easily accessed online at FamilySearch (**familysearch.org/search/catalog/785731**) and are indexed at Tony Martin-Jones' site: **apex.net.au/~tmj/jam-prob.htm**. Ancestry, Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) and ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**) might have wills of British people with Jamaican interests.

Full details of digitised records can be found via FamilySearch's catalogue

Following slavery, the British encouraged a system of indentured labour for immigrants from China and India, and even enticed German settlers to fill the void in the rural workforce. Many remained, so some Jamaicans claim descent from a mixture of ethnic groups.



This map from 1866 shows the areas where martial law was declared following the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion

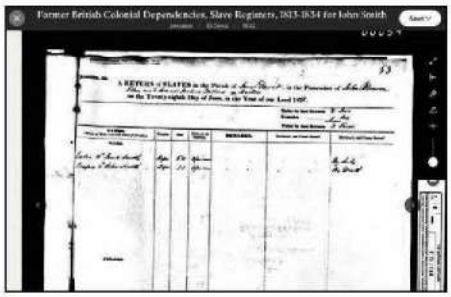
Immigration Records

However, names could be anglicised, and few records systematically documented the arrival or employment of economic migrants. Surviving records from the Protector of Immigrants Department at the JARD (1845–1958) are outlined on the NLJ's website at **nlj.gov.jm/caribbeanregister/docs/The%20Indentureship%20Collection.pdf**. These include emigrant agreement forms and passes that record Indian immigrants' fathers' names, dependants, and residence in India.

There are few religious

Expert Picks

Laura recommends these online resources for researching Jamaican roots



Ancestry

w **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1129**

You can use this free Ancestry collection to search for names of slaves or enslavers in registers dating from 1817 and updated every three years through to 1832.

FamilySearch

w **tinyurl.com/fs-jamaica**

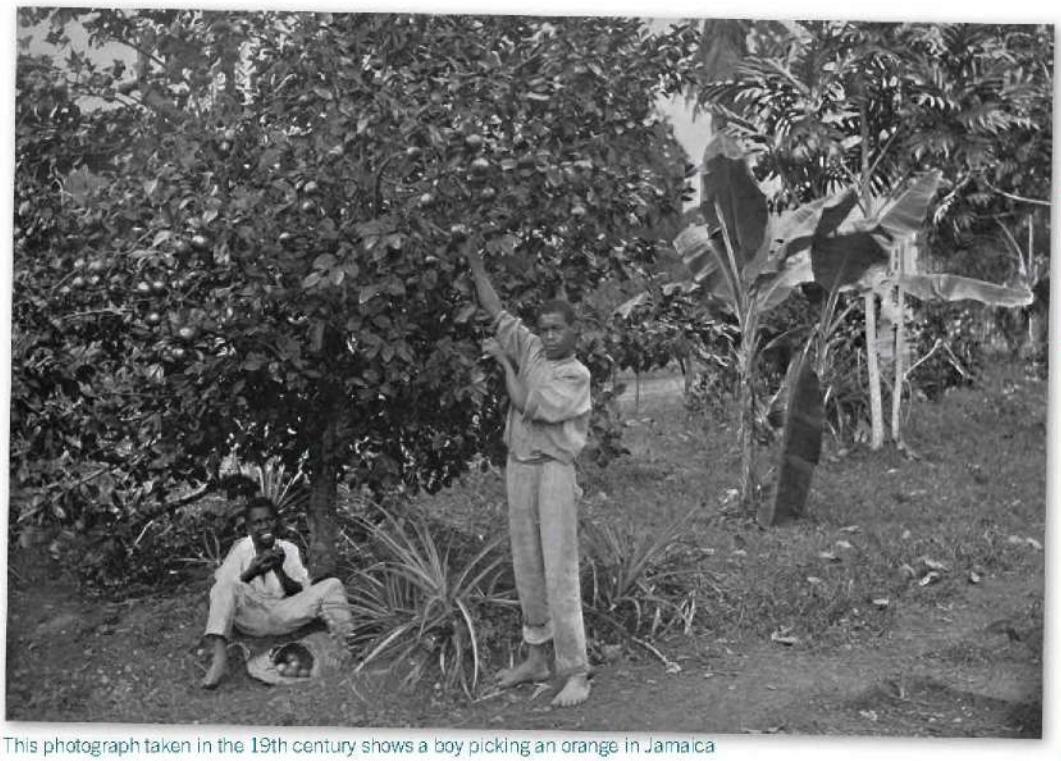
This is the free hub for accessing digitised civil registration records of births, marriages and deaths in Jamaica, plus parish registers back to the time of slavery.

Jamaican Family Search

w **www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com**

Here you will find transcriptions of almanacs, directories, wills, memorial inscriptions, denominational registers, newspaper indexes, slavery records and more – all for free.

GETTY IMAGES



This photograph taken in the 19th century shows a boy picking an orange in Jamaica

records in the archives, besides those of the Anglican Church and a minority of Dissenter chapels. Places of worship might retain them, but a small collection of non-Anglican registers and indexes are at the JARD and the Island Record Office, with some digitised on FamilySearch and transcribed at **www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Samples/Members.htm**, including records from local Jewish and Roman Catholic communities. Many headstones have been indexed at the site Jamaican Ancestral Records (**jamaicanancestralrecords.com**), while memorials and legal notices are alongside news reports in the *Jamaica Gleaner* back to 1834 at **gleaner.newspaperarchive.com**, and the *Royal Gazette of Jamaica*, the *Budget* and the *Morning Journal* at the British Newspaper Archive (**britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**).

Landowners usually had a private family burial site on their plot, which might contain headstones over a century old. Speaking to relatives or neighbours close to the old family home can reveal overgrown grave sites.

Thankfully, millions of civil and Anglican birth, marriage and death records from the RGD are freely digitised on FamilySearch (with indexes on Ancestry and Findmypast). Civil registration began from 1878, and both civil and earlier church records are arranged by parish, but be aware of boundary changes – old maps, like those at the David Rumsey Map Collection (**davidrumsey.com**), can help. Without census returns it's vital to search for all siblings to build the fullest picture. Jamaican nicknames often bear no resemblance to registered names though, and first and middle names were interchangeable. Children's births were often registered without a first name, so are only identifiable searching for the parents' or mother's names; also check under maiden surnames in case a mother had children born outside marriage who later informally acquired their father's surname.

Full details of digitised records can be found by visiting FamilySearch's catalogue at **familysearch.org/search/catalog**, selecting 'Jamaica' as the 'Place', then clicking 'Search'. Generally, online births end in 1930, but marriages might be found until 1950, and deaths as late as 1999, although there are missing entries. You can also upload a tree to Ancestry to connect with distant cousins worldwide, and order recent certificates from the General Register Office for England and Wales (**https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/**). These usually contain clues for tracing older records in Jamaica. Details of many Jamaicans who joined the British Army and Merchant Navy during the world wars are on Findmypast, and the Windrush Generation appears in Ancestry's UK and Irish incoming passenger lists (1878–1960) at **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1518**.

Copies of certificates not yet digitised can be obtained remotely from the RGD, which also offers a full genealogical 'Outtamany Search' service (see **rgd.gov.jm/index.php/products-and-service/genealogical-research**). This refers to the country's national motto 'Out of Many, One People', a reminder of Jamaica's rich multicultural heritage.

TOP TIP!

An AncestryDNA test (**ancestry.co.uk/dna**) can identify distant cousins, and suggest where your ancestors originated before their arrival in the Caribbean.

GETTY IMAGES

RESOURCES

Take your research further

ARCHIVES

JAMAICA ARCHIVES AND RECORDS DEPARTMENT

a Corner of King and Manchester Streets, Spanish Town, St Catherine, Jamaica
t +1 876 984 2581
e *jarchives@jard.gov.jm*
w **jard.gov.jm**
The material here includes church registers, probate inventories, and private and estate papers.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF JAMAICA

a 12 East Street, Kingston, Jamaica
t +1 876 967 2464
w **nlj.gov.jm**
The library has old maps, newspapers and deeds.

REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT AND ISLAND RECORD OFFICE

a Twickenham Park, Spanish Town, St Catherine, Jamaica
t +1 876 619 1260, extension 6124
e *information@rgd.gov.jm*
w **rgd.gov.jm**
Civil registration records, wills and Registers of Deeds can be found here.

BOOK

Jamaican Ancestry
Madeleine E Mitchell
Heritage Books, 2019
This title is a good overview.

WEBSITE

LEGACIES OF BRITISH SLAVERY

w **ucl.ac.uk/lbs**
Search a database of estates and plantation owners, plus view an interactive map from 1804 and research guides.

LAURA BERRY is one of the *WDYTYA?* genealogists and the author of *Discover Your Ancestors' Occupations* (2015)

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British soldiers fight the Boers in the Battle of Belmont in the Orange Free State, 23 November 1899

SECOND BOER WAR

Jonathan Scott shares online resources for researching the conflict and its participants

The word 'Boer' was the common name attributed to Afrikaans-speaking farmers, descendants of Dutch East India Company settlers. What started as attacks on British colonial settlements escalated to major sieges of Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking. Soon more British forces were sent to the continent, on the surface winning territory and freeing the besieged settlements. The reality was an increasingly bloody war of attrition against guerrilla fighters, which was only ended by brutal British tactics that included partitioning occupied territory and imprisoning civilians in concentration camps, where many thousands died of starvation and disease.

A good starting point for research is The National Archives' online research guide (**nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/the-south-african-war-1899-1902-overview**) which describes how to find records of British Army personnel, as well as soldiers in African forces under British control. Although no engagements were fought at sea, some Royal Marines and Royal Navy men also fought on land alongside soldiers.

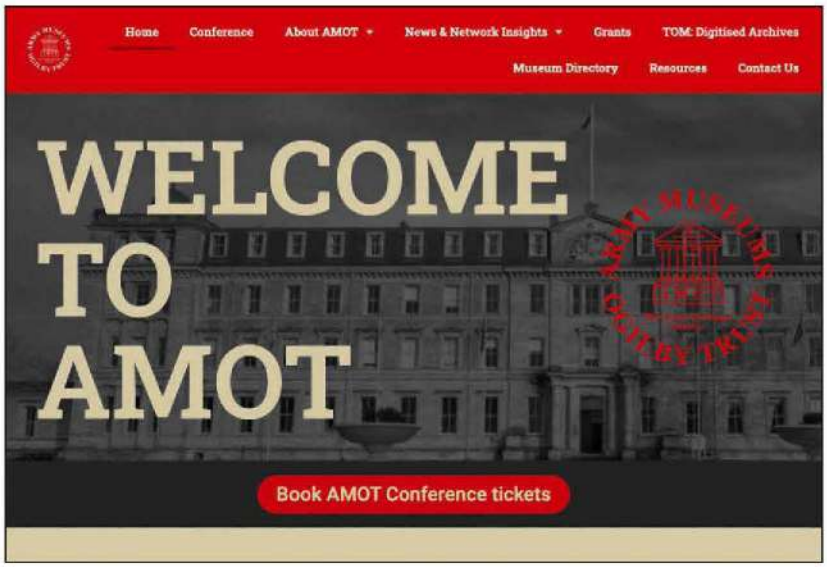
GETTY IMAGES

ANGLOBOERWAR.COM

w **angloboerwar.com**

This excellent resource was started by Dr David Biggins and his late brother Chris, and in November celebrates two decades online – and about 26 million hits to date. It brings together information on the war, as well as other South African conflicts between 1779 and 1906, including material on medals, records, books, regimental histories and biographies, alongside a busy forum. Indeed at time of writing it boasted 753,000 soldiers' records, 131 full-text books and 52,000 images. Recent additions include a database on Second Boer War tribute medals. The only previous work on this topic was a 1982 book detailing fewer than 100 examples. Through the work of Neville Constantine the site hosts a list of more than 1,300 well-documented medals.

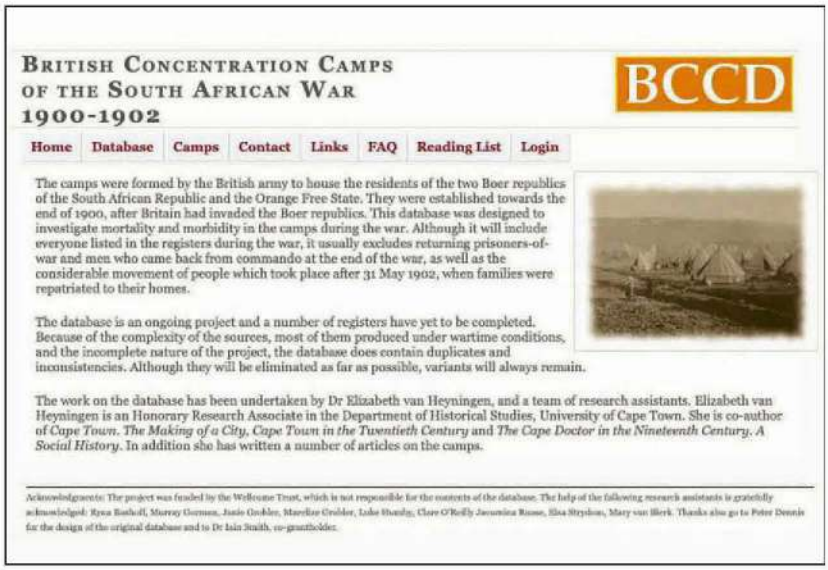
BEST WEBSITES



ARMY MUSEUMS OGILBY TRUST

w **armymuseums.org.uk**

Outside centralised sources for military research, lots of material is hidden away in smaller regimental collections. The Army Museums Ogilby Trust was established in 1954 to support these institutions, and via its website you can explore a directory of museums across the UK. Many provide useful online tools, from articles and image libraries, to indexes and finding aids. The trust also spearheaded the Ogilby Muster (**theogilbymuster.com**), a subscription-based platform through which member institutions can share documents, photographs, letters and diaries. Although the main focus is the First World War, the online collections cover 1900–1929.



BRITISH CONCENTRATION CAMPS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR 1900–1902

w **www2.lib.uct.ac.za/mss/bccd/**

A project investigating mortality rates in British concentration camps resulted in this database of names compiled from the original camp registers, held at the National Archives in Pretoria and the Free State Archives. The camps were established towards the end of 1900 in order to house displaced residents of the two Boer Republics. The database includes everyone listed in the registers, excluding returning prisoners-of-war and often omitting the mass migration that took place after the Treaty of Vereeniging formalising the Boers' surrender was signed on 31 May 1902.

EXPERT'S CHOICE

Dr David Biggins, co-creator of the website **AngloBoerWar.com**

The City of London Imperial Volunteers are celebrated in the Guildhall after returning from South Africa in 1900

The feelings of patriotism and duty generated by the outbreak of the Second Boer War in late 1899 led to a large influx of willing volunteers. Men and women offered their services to the British Crown or two Boer Republics, and travelled great distances to participate. Attestation papers record participants from Argentina, the USA, Norway, Sweden and Germany. Notably large numbers of international participants came from those countries with closer ties to Britain – Canada, New Zealand and Australia in particular. Perhaps given their smaller numbers compared with the hundreds of thousands of participants from Britain and South Africa, these men and women offer the genealogist richer, more accessible and concentrated data sources, especially for those who fought for the Crown, than are typically available – with the added benefit of being free to access.

Library and Archives Canada's online database (**https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/south-african-war-1899-1902/Pages/service-files-south-african-war.aspx**) combines medal rolls, service files and land applications, and eases the task of tracing any service in the First World War too. The website of the Australian War Memorial in Campbell (**awm.gov.au/research/guide/south-africa**) provides a useful gateway to a range of Second Boer War-related repositories. The government website New Zealand History hosts an embarkation database (**nzhistory.govt.nz/war/new-zealand-in-the-south-african-boer-war/database**) containing useful biographical information that can help narrow down searches of global repositories such as FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**). Finally the Online Cenotaph on Auckland Museum's website (**aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph**) is a searchable database of all New Zealand service personnel, and offers a broad array of data and lists of sources.

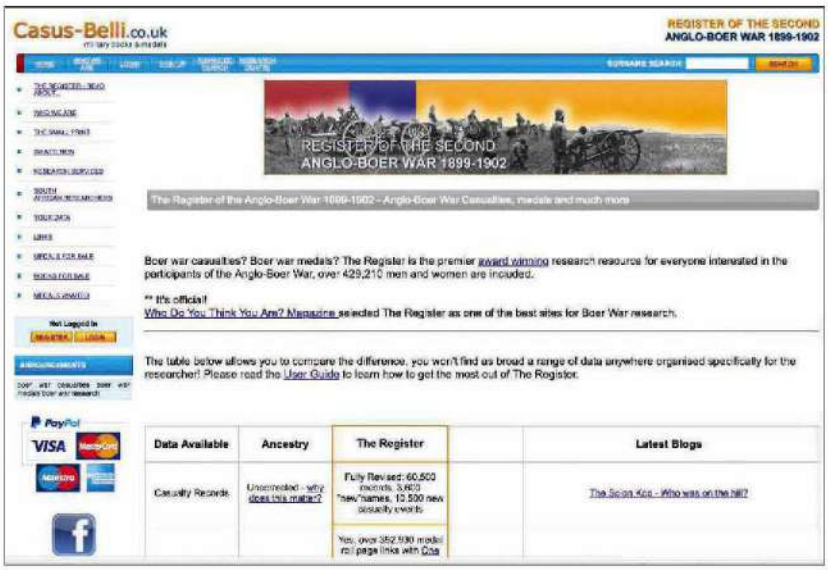
Approximately 35,000 men and women from these three countries served in South Africa, and I hope that these links will enable their stories to become better known.

GETTY IMAGES

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

w **nam.ac.uk/explore/boer-war**

The NAM's website includes this detailed summary of the conflict. It starts with the origins of unrest, caused by the British desire to unite its South African territories with the Boer Republics, and the Afrikaans-speaking farmers' desire to stay independent. This was brought to a head by the discovery of gold in the South African Republic in 1886, which led to a huge influx of English-speaking *uitlanders* (outlanders). The site includes maps, timelines and photos, plus material on the First Boer War (1880–1881) between the British and the Transvaal Boers in the South African Republic. Click 'Collections' in the menu bar for advice about researching individuals.



CASUS-BELLI.CO.UK

w **casus-belli.co.uk**

This military specialist is home to the Register of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902, a pay-per-view database of more than 428,500 participants. The register is compiled from various sources, the largest being the medal roll and clasp entitlements. There's also casualty records, lists of honours and awards, and a growing number of names linked to war memorials (you can learn about the Anglo-Boer War Memorials Project recording memorials around the world at **theangloboerwars.blogspot.com/p/war-memorials.html**). Note that some of the data here is on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) too, and that the register also licenses its data to Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**).

Go Further

More websites that can help your research

ANCESTRY

w **ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1686**

This medal database includes around 178,000 individuals who were awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal including details of the bars awarded for participation in specific actions.

BRITAIN'S SMALL FORGOTTEN WARS

w **britainssmallwars.co.uk**

This website surveys obscure wars and battles from the past 200 years, including numerous conflicts on the African continent.

BRITISH BATTLES

w **britishbattles.com**

Browsing the left-hand column of this website leads to battles listed by conflict. You can then read detailed pages on combatants and commanders, narratives and illustrations.

BRITISH MEDAL FORUM

w **britishmedalforum.com**

This is an excellent site if you're having difficulty identifying militaria. You could also try the Orders and Medals Research Society (**omrs.org**).

FINDMYPAST

w **bit.ly/fmp-army-serv-recs**

This collection of British Army service records include many for those who served in the conflict.

FORCES WAR RECORDS

w **bit.ly/fwr-second-boer-war-cas-roll**

The military specialist has the Second Boer War casualty roll containing 75,000 names.

SANDHURST COLLECTION

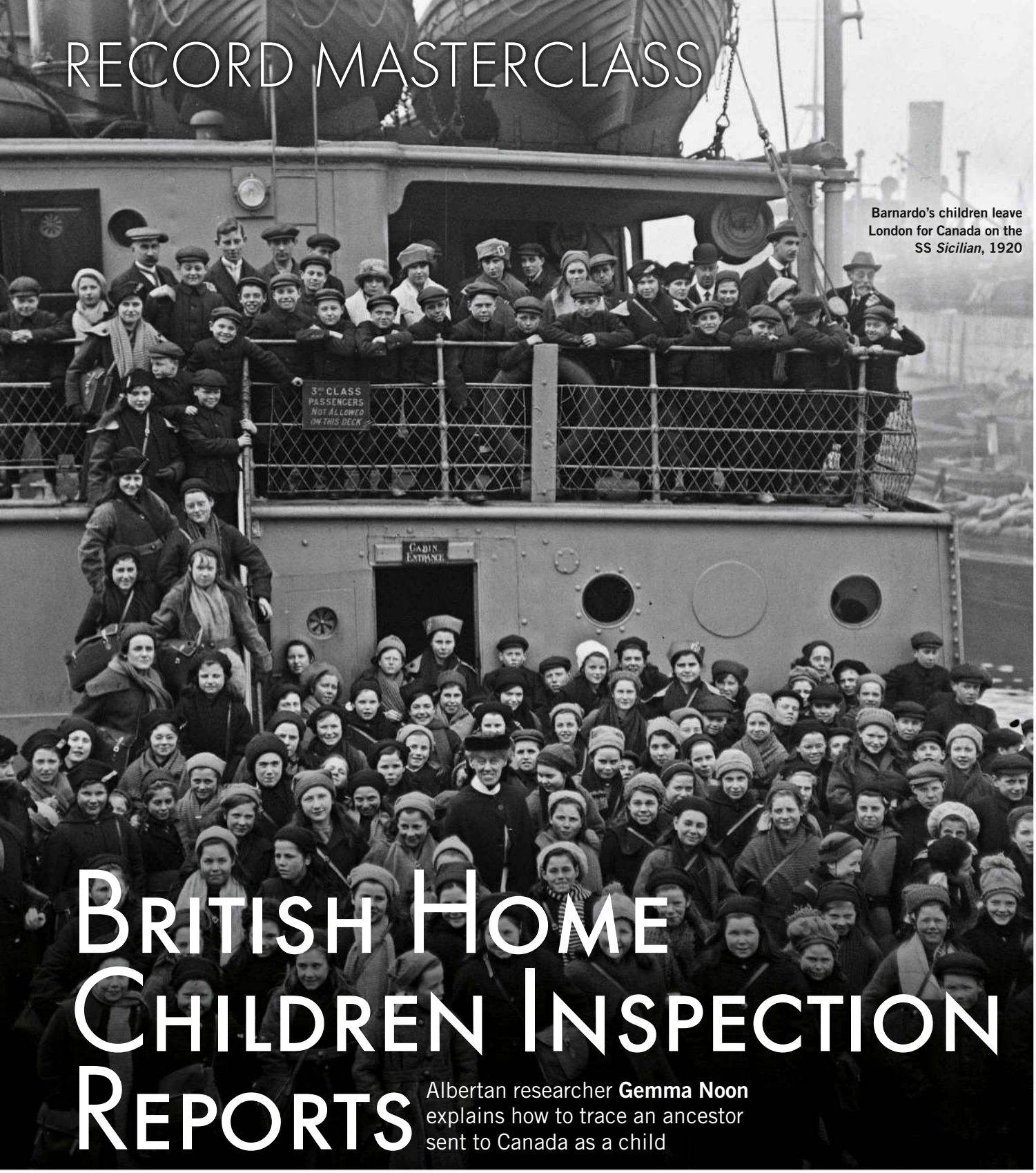
w **archive.sandhurstcollection.co.uk**

This subscription or pay-per-view site enables you to search registers of cadets, cemetery records, photos and magazines for those who attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY HISTORY SOCIETY

w **samilitaryhistory.org**

Here you can read articles from back issues of the society's long-running journal.



Barnardo's children leave London for Canada on the SS *Sicilian*, 1920

British Home Children Inspection Reports

Albertan researcher **Gemma Noon** explains how to trace an ancestor sent to Canada as a child

Scottish social activist Annie MacPherson founded the Home Children migration scheme in 1869, aiming to provide destitute and orphaned children from the UK with a chance at a better life abroad. Between 1869 and 1948, more than 100,000 children from the poorest classes in Britain were sent to live and work in Canada. While they were often referred to as orphans, the vast majority had a living parent. These children were not, by and large, intended to be adopted into loving families, but were to become indentured servants on farms or in homes. While some did find new families, many more experienced abuse, hardship and a sense of shame that led to them hiding their roots well into adulthood. Few ever managed to reconnect with their families in Britain.

Diversity Of Records

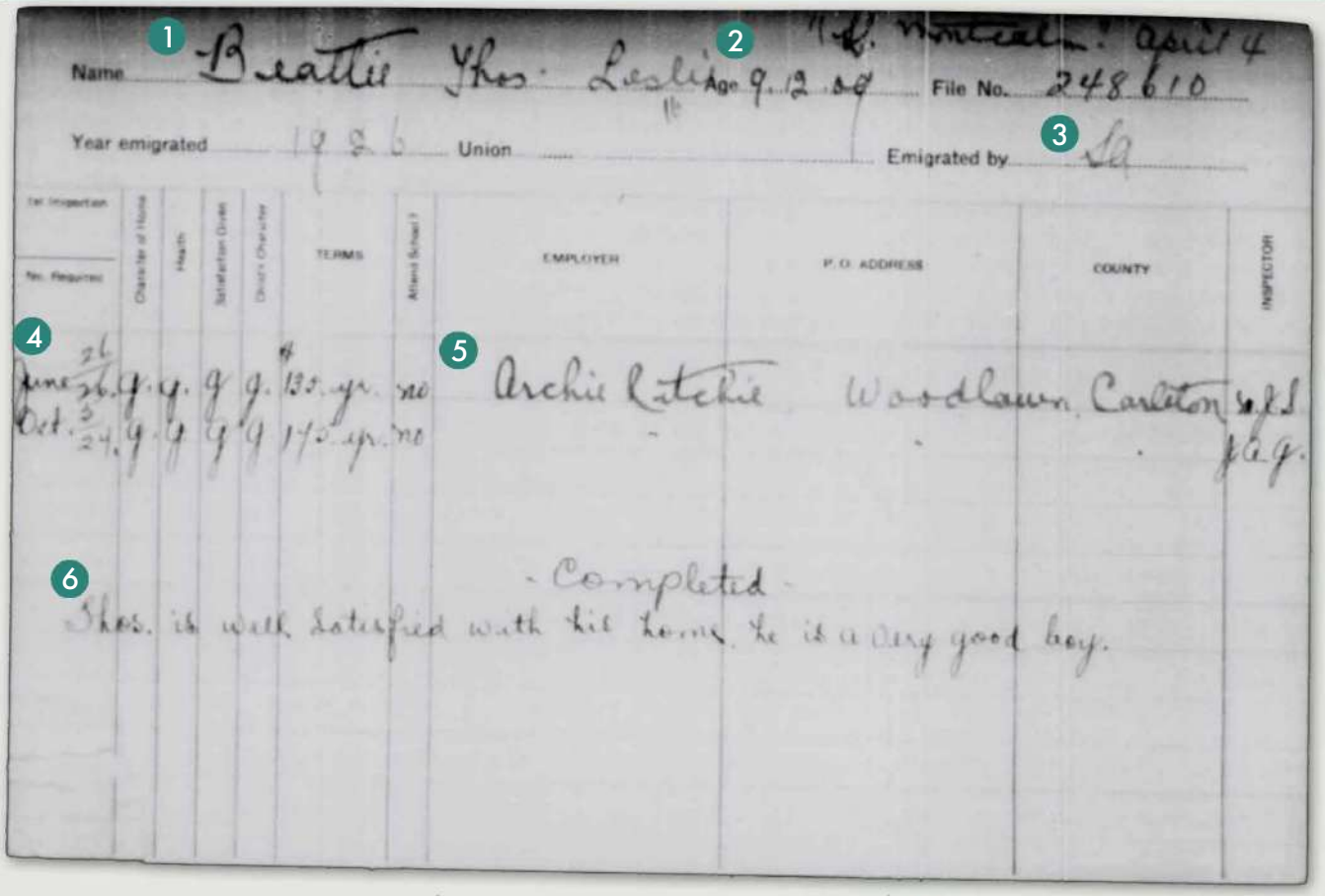
Although the Home Children programme was technically overseen by the British government, it relied heavily on charitable or religious organisations to operate, including Barnardo's, the Salvation Army and MacPherson's organisation. As a result, records about Home Children are dispersed across multiple repositories, and encompass a range of document types.

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) holds the largest and most extensive collection of records about British Home Children, for example passenger lists, immigration files and

GETTY IMAGES

Inspection Report, 1927

This record is held by Library and Archives Canada (**https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng**) and available digitally on Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) in the collection 'Canada, Home Children Inspection Reports'



1 Name
This usually matches the one that the child emigrated with, although some changed their name if adopted in Canada.

2 Age
A birthdate may be given here instead.

3 Emigrated By
The name of the organisation that arranged the child's emigration is often abbreviated or reduced to its initials, in this case the Salvation Army.

4 Inspections
This section of the report includes the inspection date(s) in addition to the employer and inspector's opinions regarding the individual child's environment, health, conduct and character.

5 Employer
The adult who was responsible for the child's welfare, and their address, are recorded. If it's a single word, then the location is likely to be a farm.

6 Inspector's Comments
These can be brief or quite detailed, but the child was never interviewed separately from their employer/foster carer.

inspection reports, as well as some non-government collections such as the Middlemore Home archive. LAC's free Home Children Records database (available at **https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/home-children-1869-1930/immigration-records/Pages/search.aspx**) is based on more than 245,000 records that were transcribed and indexed by LAC staff and volunteers, including members of the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa (BIFHSGO; **bifhsgo.ca**). These records generally contain information such as the child's name, gender, age, year of travel, and both the departure and arrival ports. They usually include the name of the agency responsible for each child, which can help you to access further records.

However, even though the port of arrival is included in these records, this does not reflect the destination of each child or share information about their life and foster families. For this, inspection records are usually required. Findmypast has recently made these available digitally with the collection 'Canada, Home Children Inspection Reports' (**search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/canada-home-children-inspection-reports**).

Officials' Inspections

These records, spanning 1913–1932, are a series of note cards created by immigration officials conducting inspections

Children at a Barnardo's home in Liverpool have their luggage inspected before their emigration to Canada, 20 April 1929

GETTY IMAGES

▶ after the child was placed in a Canadian home. The collection can be searched by name, year of immigration, the sending agency (such as Barnardo's, the Salvation Army or the Catholic Emigration Association), or keyword. As well as containing essential information such as the child's full name and date of birth, records also note the year that the child arrived in Canada, and the name of the ship that transported them.

The key strength of these records, however, is the inclusion of the name and address of each foster family, although it is telling that they are listed as "employer" on the report cards. In the cases of farms and other rural locations, this may be the name of a hamlet or township, while urban placements tend to include the full address. The inspection date is included, as is basic information about the status of the child's placement, and in some cases there is additional commentary about the child, their relationships with the family, whether they returned to the UK, or if they had run away.

Regardless of that, it is important to remember that these records were intended for use as propaganda for the Home Children programme, and that the children were rarely present during the inspection, let alone asked for their opinion. Survivors later told stories of abuse and neglect that directly contradict the notes in the inspection records, so they should always be treated with caution when you are using them for research.

Children were rarely present during the inspection, let alone asked for their opinion

Credit Where It's Due

Finally, all credit for raising awareness about Home Children goes to the advocates and researchers whose tireless work on behalf of the children and their families cannot be overstated. If your own relation was sent abroad, or if you're just interested in learning more about this often-forgotten chapter in British and Commonwealth history, the website of one of these groups, Home Children Canada, is an excellent place for you to start: **homechildrencanada.com.**

TOP TIP!

When searching the records, bear pet names, middle names and variants in mind. Elizabeth Jane Smyth could have been registered as Bessie, Lizzie or Jane Smith, for example.

GEMMA NOON is a co-founder of Folklore Research, a historical research and heritage consultancy based in Cochrane, Alberta, Canada (**folkloreresearch.com**)

Resources

Don't miss these websites

CANADIAN BRITISH HOME CHILDREN

w **tinyurl.com/cbhc-barn-mag**

This website, which is run by Home Children Canada, includes priceless information and free resources, not least an incomplete collection of magazines published by Barnardo's from 1895 onwards that contain the names of Home Children.

HOME CHILDREN (LITTLE IMMIGRANTS)

w **lambtonmuseums.ca/en/lambton-county-archives/home-children-little-immigrants.aspx**

This illustrated online exhibition, created by Lambton County Archives in Wyoming, Ontario, features first-hand accounts that reveal the experiences of Home Children, including relations' memories.

THE GOLDEN BRIDGE

w **content.iriss.org.uk/goldenbridge/**

The Golden Bridge tells the story of Home Children who migrated from Scotland to Canada (1869–1939).

Q&A

Our team of experts offers tips and inspiration Edited By Claire Vaughan

Anthony Adolph is a professional genealogist and the author of 11 books

Peter Higginbotham is the creator of the website **workhouses.org.uk**

Debbie Kennett is the author of *DNA and Social Networking*

Jayne Shrimpton is a professional dress historian and portrait specialist

Alan Stewart is a family history writer, and author of *Grow Your Own Family Tree*

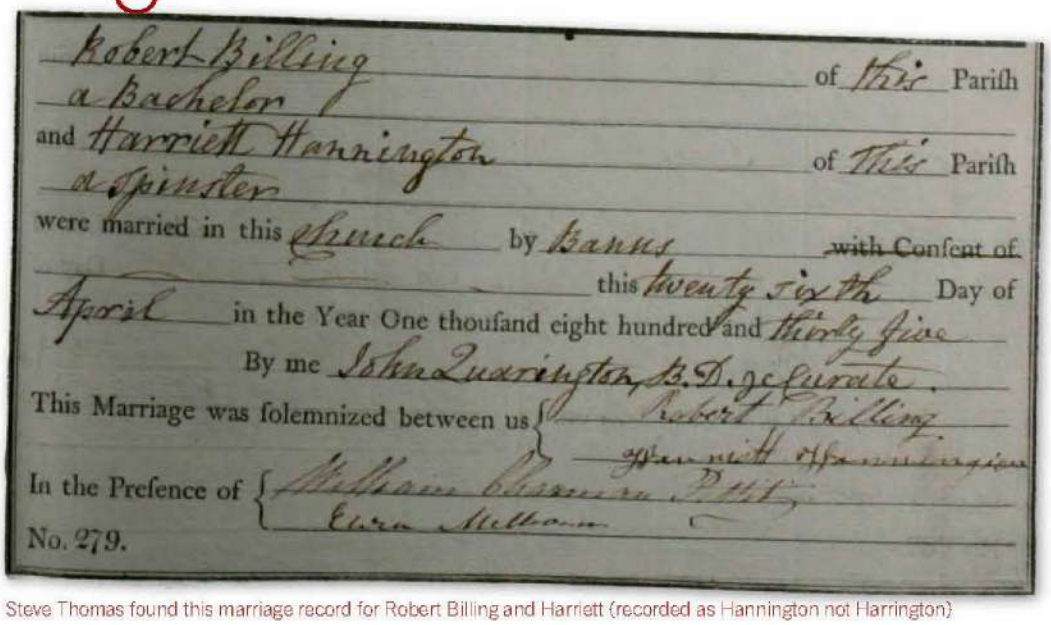
Steve Thomas is a genealogist with over 20 years' experience

Phil Tomaselli is a military family history expert and author

Did my 4x great aunt Amelia have a daughter called Harriet?

Q My 4x great aunt, Amelia Harrington, was born in 1806 in Kent. She may have had a daughter, Harriet. I've found an 1874 marriage between Harriet Billing, widow, and Frederick Middleton listing Amelia Harrington as the father! From this document, it appears Harriet was born in 1823 in Iver, Buckinghamshire. Amelia married John Davis on 2 March 1828 at St Anne's, Soho, but I can't find a marriage for Harriet Harrington or Davis to a Billing. However, I have found a Harriet Harrington baptised on 20 September 1812 at Iver, parents William Goldwin/Golding and Amelia Harrington, which would mean that Amelia was six when she had Harriet!

Terri Peck


Robert Billing
a Bachelor of this Parish
and Harriett Hannington
a Spinster of this Parish
were married in this Church by Banns with Consent of
this twenty sixth Day of
April in the Year One thousand eight hundred and thirty five
By me John Warrington, B.D. Curate.
This Marriage was solemnized between us { Robert Billing
Harriett Hannington
In the Presence of { William Goldwin Pitt
Eliza Pitt
No. 279.

Steve Thomas found this marriage record for Robert Billing and Harriett (recorded as Hannington not Harrington)

A Working back from the 1874 marriage certificate, I managed to find a Billing/Harrington marriage. According to the collection 'England Marriages 1538–1973' on Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**), Robert Billing and Harriett Hannington (as her name appears) married on 26 April 1835 at St Dionis Backchurch, London.

From the information in the 1841 census, neither were born in London, Robert is a silversmith and Harriett is aged 25–29 years. So, she must have been born between 1812 and 1816.

In 1851, Harriett is living with Frederick Middleton as man and wife and Robert is absent. She says she was born in "Buckingham" in about 1821.

In 1861, Harriett is recorded as the wife of Frederick Middleton and there is a lodger, Robert Thompson, born in East Haddon, Northamptonshire, in about 1816. Harriett says she was born in Iver, Buckinghamshire, in about 1819.

In 1871, Harriett and Frederick are listed as a married couple. A Robert Billing now lives with them and is a looking-glass silverer, born East Haddon, Northamptonshire. Harriett was born c1822 in Iver, Buckinghamshire.

Eventually, in 1874, Frederick and Harriett actually marry and she says she was born in about 1823. It is likely that Robert Billing died between 1871 and 1874.

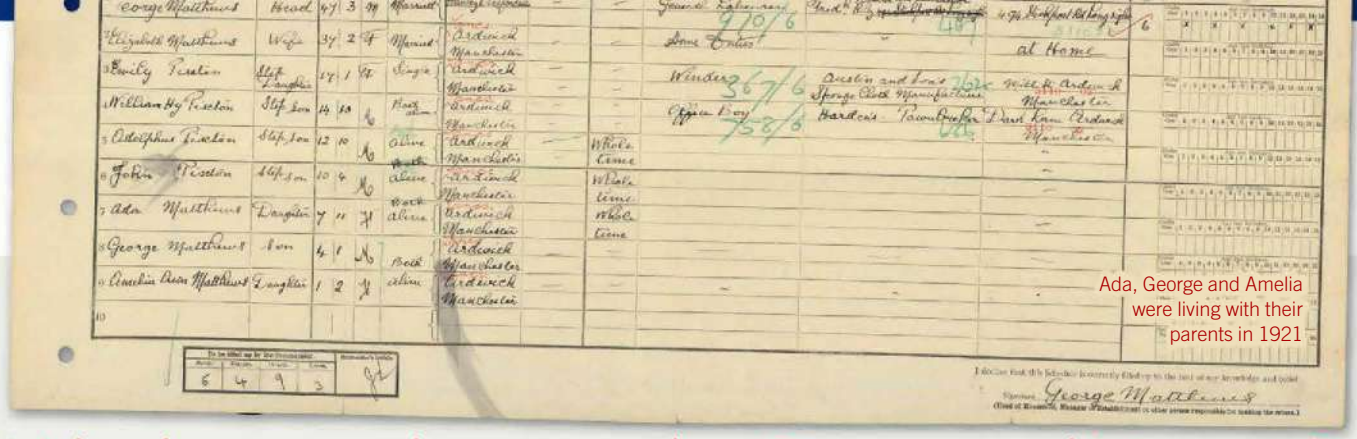
A check of the Iver parish registers suggests that her age was probably much nearer what she gave in 1841, meaning a birth year of 1812–1816. As you found on Findmypast, a Harriett Harrington, daughter of William Goldwin and Amelia Harrington, was baptised on 20 September 1812 in Iver. As this is a transcription, seek out the original record if possible.

In any event, if Harriett was born in 1812, she is clearly not the daughter of your Amelia and these events appear to be coincidental.

Steve Thomas

HAVE YOU HIT A BRICK WALL? Please email your questions or family photographs to the following address: **wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk**

If selected, your query will be answered on these pages. Please note that we receive a large volume of correspondence each month, and cannot reply to each message individually. You are more likely to receive a response if you keep the question and background information concise (no more than 150 words), with a clear goal of enquiry.



Ada, George and Amelia were living with their parents in 1921

What happened to my uncles, George and Maurice?

Q My mother, Amelia Ann, was born in 1920 in Ardwick, Manchester. She had an older sister, Ada, born in 1913 and an older brother, George, born in 1917. They also had a younger brother, Maurice, born in 1922. Their mother died shortly after Maurice was born. The three older children went into a children's home in Manchester somewhere, and then to Styal Homes, Wilmslow, Cheshire. What happened to George and Maurice?
Jacqueline Moore

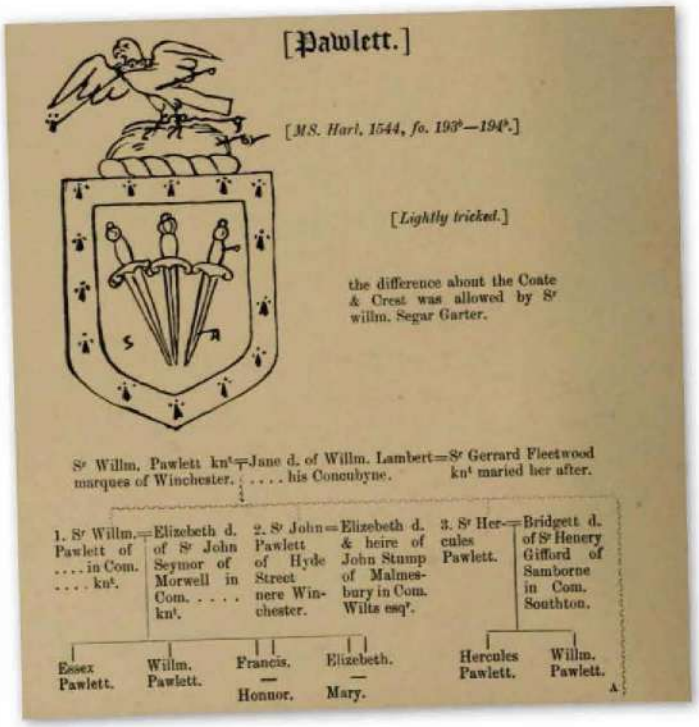
A The 1921 census reveals that George, Amelia and Ada were living with their father, also called George, and mother Elizabeth (previously Pixton). Marriage indexes show that George and Elizabeth married in 1912. He took on her daughter and three sons from her previous marriage. Elizabeth's death in 1922, two weeks after Maurice's birth, would have left George senior struggling to keep the family going. His first line of support would probably have been his or Elizabeth's relatives, who might have been able to take in the younger children. Failing that, there were many children's homes in the Manchester area run by charitable or religious organisations.

Your mention of Styal indicates that the family ended up getting help from the Chorlton Union – the local Poor Law authority – which ran a large workhouse at Withington. In 1898, the union opened a children's 'cottage homes' development close to Styal's Quarry Bank Mill. There were a dozen cottages, each housing 20 boys or girls under the care of a house mother. The site also included workshops, hospital, laundry and swimming pool, with later additions doubling the accommodation and providing a chapel and nurseries. In 1962, the site became Styal women's prison, with many of the original buildings still standing.

Surviving records for the cottage homes at Manchester Archives might hold a clue as to what happened to your uncles (the catalogue is at **gmlives.org.uk**). They include admission registers (1903–1962), which might also identify the children's previous home. Note that files less than 100 years old have access restrictions. There is more information on the cottage homes at **workhouses.org.uk/Chorlton/#Homes**.
Peter Higginbotham

Who were Marie and Jane Pawlet's parents?

Q Marie Pawlet married George Southcombe in 1574 in Satterleigh, Devonshire, and had five children baptised in nearby Meshaw. Marie died in 1586 and George married Jane Pawlet. Family letters allege Jane was the illegitimate daughter of "Lord Pawlet of Basing House". The Southcombe family has a family tankard showing the Pawlet coat of arms, but I've searched the Heralds' Visitation records without success. The 3rd Marquess of Winchester is known to have had five illegitimate children by his mistress, Jane Lambert, so I wonder if Marie and Jane may have been his offspring.
Patricia Feeney


[Pawlett.]

[*MS. Harl. 1544, fo. 193b—194b.*]

[*Lightly tricked.*]

the difference about the Coate & Crest was allowed by Sr willm. Segar Garter.

Sr Willm. Pawlett knt marques of Winchester. = Jane d. of Willm. Lambert his Concubyne. = Sr Gerrard Fleetwood knt maried her after.

1. Sr Willm. Pawlett of .... in Com. .... knt. = Elizebeth d. of Sr John Seymor of Morwell in Com. .... knt.
2. Sr John Pawlett of Hyde Street nere Winchester. = Elizebeth d. & heire of John Stump of Malmesbury in Com. Wilts esqr.
3. Sr Hercules Pawlett. = Bridgett d. of Sr Henery Gifford of Samborne in Com. Southton.

Essex Pawlett. — Willm. Pawlett. — Francis. — Honnor. — Elizebeth. — Mary. — Hercules Pawlett. — Willm. Pawlett.

Patricia has this Pawlett pedigree showing the 3rd Marquess and Jane Lambert

A Meshaw's parish registers survive from 1580 and Satterleigh's from 1574 (Bishops' Transcripts started in 1598). Marie and Jane may have been baptised there, before the records start. You should scour the early decades of the surviving registers for other Pawlets, especially burials of people who could be their parents, grandparents, and so on. Similarly check any surviving tax lists, muster rolls and manorial-court records. Although most wills proved at Exeter do not survive, the will indexes do and could identify possible ancestors for them.

In the absence of certainty, family genealogists often were (and still are) tempted to connect ancestors to famous people of the same surname, so a family story of a direct descent from the Paulets, who were Marquesses of Winchester, is not surprising. The tankard said to show their arms is not evidence of a direct descent from the Marquesses. A family of Pawlets in Satterley could have been a distant offshoot of the Marquess' family, and had silverware made accordingly – and the Heralds' Visitation records may not have picked this up.

Try to track down the wills of the 3rd Marquess and other Pawlets (in Hampshire and the Prerogative Court of Canterbury) to see if Marie and Jane were named as 'natural' children – it did happen, sometimes.
Anthony Adolph

Picture Analysis

Who's with my great grandmother?

Q This group photograph shows Mary Jane Brotherton (née Boyes, born 1878), far left – my great grandmother. The young girl is probably her daughter, Annie (born 1913). Mary Jane had three sisters – Annie (born 1875), Mary Ellen (born 1883), and Elizabeth born 1894 (her half-sister). The other two women could be her younger sisters. The boy could be Bernard (born 1921) or Thomas (born 1925), Mary Ellen's sons. Can you help?
Lauren Potts

A This professional studio portrait is presented as a divided-back postcard, the most popular photographic format of the early to mid-1900s. In a group scene with males and females of different ages, the appearance of young adult women (or older girls in adult clothes) always provides the closest, most reliable date. Here the outfits and hairstyles of the teenagers/young women seated centre and right confirm that the photo was taken towards the end of the First World War or soon after. Their 'coat-frocks' or 'coat-dresses' were fashionable c1916–1922.

The mature lady left, identified as your great grandmother, wears a more conservative dark blouse and skirt. Facially and dress-wise, I agree she could be Mary Jane Brotherton. The young girl, aged about 7–10, could then be Annie, if the photo was taken 1920–1922. The other females, aged late teens or 20s, don't seem to fit Mary Ellen, although one could theoretically be Elizabeth. That still leaves one female and the boy unidentified. Perhaps they constituted a household: it might help to consult the 1921 census.
Jayne Shrimpton

1 OCCASION

This is a typical First World War group scene with women and children, but no adult men. Such photographs were often sent to servicemen overseas.

2 YOUNG GIRL'S OUTFIT

The schoolgirl wears her 'Sunday best' white outfit, the skirt still knee-length due to her young age, her ringlet hairstyle and large white bow on one side very fashionable at the time.

3 COAT-FROCKS

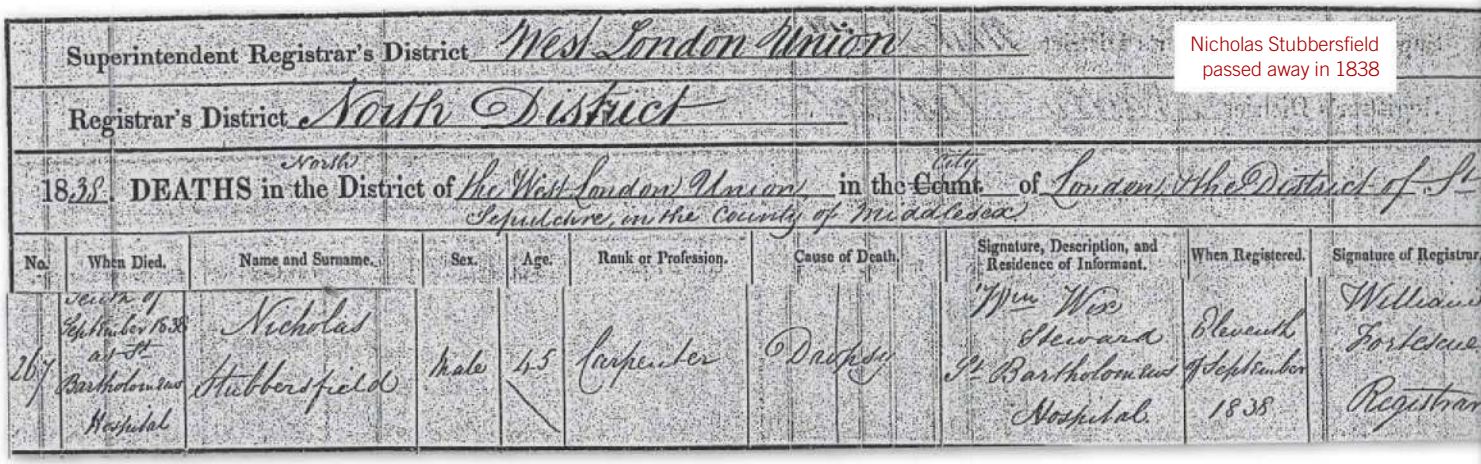
Coat-frocks or coat-dresses were a First World War innovation. Comfortable, practical and not unattractive, they had a slightly high waistline, low-calf-length hemline, large flat collars and a roomy 'barrel-shaped' style.

4 BOY'S CLOTHES

These semi-smart play clothes are typical of the late 1910s and 1920s: short shorts, jersey/blouse with large collar, ankle socks and T-bar sandals.

5 HAIRBANDS

The narrow hairbands of the older teens/young women were a brief youthful fashion, characteristic of the late 1910s/early 1920s when long hair was soon to be cut short.



Superintendent Registrar's District West London Union

Registrar's District North District

1838. DEATHS in the District of the West London Union in the ~~County~~ City of London, the District of St Sepulchre, in the County of Middlesex

No.	When Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
267	Seventh of September 1838 at St Bartholomews Hospital	Nicholas Stubbersfield	Male	45	Carpenter	Dropsy	Wm Wise Steward St Bartholomews Hospital	Eleventh of September 1838	William Fortescue Registrar

Nicholas Stubbersfield passed away in 1838

Is this death certificate for my Nicholas Stubberfield?

Q I've hit a brick wall regarding my 3x great grandfather, Nicholas Stubbersfield, who married Ann Baker in St Mary's Church, Chatham, Kent, on 9 December 1812. A son, John Stubbersfield, was baptised at St Nicholas Church, Rochester, on 21 November 1813.

I found a death certificate for a Nicholas Stubbersfield, who died in St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, in 1838 and wonder if he is my ancestor. How can I find out?

There is a DNA link through a possible daughter Lucy Stubbersfield, suggested by Ancestry ThruLines.

Jane Ellison

A The copy of AncestryDNA's (**ancestry.co.uk/dna**) ThruLines that you sent indicates that your son is related to Lucy's 3x great grandson by only 10 centimorgans – too little for a definite match. ThruLines is based on AncestryDNA subscribers' trees, but your Nicholas Stubbersfield has been confused with another individual of the same name.

The only other burial I could find of a Nicholas Stubbersfield in the Medway area in the early 19th century was in St Nicholas Churchyard in Strood in 1834, aged 61. This is probably the Nicholas Stubbersfield who was baptised in 1772 in the parish of St Mary Hoo. His father was also Nicholas Stubbersfield.

It's worth investigating other Stubbersfields in the area to see if you can build up a picture of the wider family and find clues to your branch. There is also the marriage of a Nicholas Stubbersfield to a Mary Woodgate in St Mary Hoo in 1777, and burials of two men of that name in the neighbouring parish of Hoo All Hallows in 1769 and 1780.

Chatham, Rochester and Strood are next to each other, while the Hoo parishes are not far away. Check the map of English jurisdictions in 1851 on FamilySearch (**familysearch.org/mapp**).

Medway Archives has a draft 1821 census return for the parish of St Nicholas, Rochester, with 518 people's details (catalogue reference P306/18/22). This information is not online, so contact staff via **medway.gov.uk/archives**.

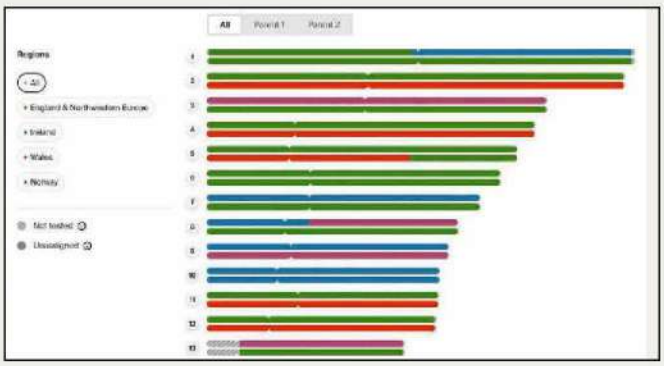
Alan Stewart

TOP TIP Although the 1841 census is the earliest used by most family historians, the UK's decennial censuses actually started in 1801. Find out more at **whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/getting-started/tracing-your-ancestors-using-the-census.**

What can Ancestry's Chromosome Painter tell me?

Q According to my AncestryDNA results, my ethnicity breakdown is 53 per cent England & Northwestern Europe, 21 per cent Ireland, 16 per cent Wales and 10 per cent Norway. I've been trying to see if Chromosome Painter can add anything. I read somewhere that the higher and longer the strand on which an ethnicity appears, the more recent in your family history it occurs. I have a whole strand of Norway DNA at my third chromosome level. What does this mean?

Bob Watson



Bob is curious about the Norwegian DNA revealed by Chromosome Painter

A AncestryDNA (**ancestry.co.uk/dna**) works out its Ethnicity Estimates by comparing your DNA to reference populations. Because only small segments of DNA are being compared, this feature provides an indication of your ancestry from about 500–1,000 years ago. Click on the small arrows next to the percentages and it will take you through to a page with a map showing the places where the ethnicity is found and the ranges.

For example, my dad has been assigned with 6 per cent from Norway, but the range is anywhere between 0 per cent and 11 per cent. AncestryDNA updates its Ethnicity Estimates on an annual basis, usually in the autumn, and it may be that, by the time you read this, the latest update will have already rolled out. The percentages can often change dramatically with each update, particularly the smaller ones. I would therefore advise against trying to ascribe any meaning to your Norway DNA. It doesn't mean you have any identifiable genealogical ancestors from Norway.

The Chromosome Painter at AncestryDNA uses the SideView technology to divide your DNA into two parental sides, and is showing you the ethnicities you have inherited from each parent. That is why you are seeing entire chromosomes painted with a single ethnicity. Ancestry has a useful support article about Chromosome Painter: **support.ancestry.co.uk/s/article/Chromosome-Painter**.

Debbie Kennett

What did my Jewish grandfather do during the First World War?

JANET PRICE would love to know more about her grandfather's service in the First World War

Q My grandfather, Nathan Myers, was the son of Jewish immigrants, Harris Myer Schwartz and Rose. He was born on 25 September 1897 in Shoreditch, London, and had five siblings. He lived in Bromley, Kent. All I know about his time during the First World War is that he was in a Jewish regiment, serving abroad, possibly – not on the front line, but maybe in catering or supplies. No one really knows for sure. This photo is our only clue.
Janet Price

A There isn't much clear detail in the photograph, but he's a British staff sergeant (the crown above his stripes), the cap badge is a fusil (an old-fashioned hand grenade) usually indicating a Fusilier regiment, and the shoulder title is one that I can't identify but may be 7th City of London Battalion (London Fusiliers).

I've searched for Nathan Myers/Nathan Myers-Schwartz, even Nathan Schwartz, in every online source I can think of. He has no Medal Index Card, no pension card, no service record. He's not in the British Jewry Roll of Honour. The nearest match was a Nathan Myers, serving in the West Lancashire Cyclist Company but discharged, unfit, in 1916, who proved to be definitely Lancastrian. But your Nathan clearly served.

MI5 appears to have decided it was safer for Nathan to only serve in the UK

In the 1911 census, I found Nathan's parents – both recorded as born in Germany, though their children were all British-born and legally British as a result. This might have caused a problem.

I've seen a First World War service record for a soldier with a German surname marked with "MI5 to see please", although he was approved. Another German, living in England for 25 years and serving 20 years in the Volunteers and Territorials, was arrested as a German spy despite his officer swearing to his British loyalty.

There was enormous suspicion of German residents (many men were interned), and even of their British-born children. Accusations were regularly made against them that needed checking. Many British sons of German parents were conscripted into the Labour Corps, but not allowed to serve abroad.

If Nathan was referred to MI5, they'd first check the census, see his German parentage, check Nathan himself was born in Britain and decide if he was a threat. He was British, so they couldn't prevent him from serving. Possibly they did what I have, and found that his father had actually naturalised in 1913, having failed in 1910 because of his poor written English.

On both applications, however, he'd claimed to be Russian, born near Warsaw (Poland was part of the Russian Empire), but that would only have complicated matters. The naturalisation files are at The National Archives (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**), reference HO 144/1071/191186 (1910) and HO 144/1139/208008 (1913), but the records aren't yet digitised.

Nathan probably volunteered in 1915, and questions of loyalty only emerged afterwards. Discreet local inquiries would have been made by Special Branch (who'd already vetted the family during naturalisation). MI5 was a security organisation, and appears to have decided it was safer for Nathan to only serve in the UK.

He was clearly a good soldier to become a staff sergeant, but Home Service did not entitle him to a medal.

The whole theory, that a British-born citizen was discouraged from fighting, sounds a bit preposterous (even to me), so I re-examined the naturalisation papers, discovering a small slip of paper I'd missed in the 1910 naturalisation file and dating from October 1942. It read "Refer to MI5" with, two days later, a note from MI5 officer Alan Johnston of C2 (Examination of Credentials) Section saying, "Seen thank you." Even nearly 30 years later, there was clearly still some interest in the Myers family.
Phil Tomaselli

The story of Nathan Myers sheds light on attitudes towards naturalised citizens

Why were these men photographed together?

Q This photograph includes my late father Arthur William Malbon (no. 4918256), back row with the goggles, when he was on loan to the Canadian Army. These men are all staff sergeants. Why might it have been taken?
Dianne Shenton

A This is a group photo of staff sergeants of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) that was probably taken to mark the end of their one-year course in late 1943 or early 1944.

The group isn't exclusively from Arthur's unit. A full list of officers and other ranks appears in the first War Diary for his unit, which is available at The National Archives (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**), reference WO 171/2965 (but not digitised), which shows five staff sergeants, only two of whom, Malbon and Lob, are in the photo. His service number is part of a group of numbers allocated to the South Staffordshire Regiment, so he must have transferred to REME when his technical skills were recognised.

WO 171/2965 covers 1944 from June (when the unit was formed) to year end, and WO 171/7003 the whole of 1945. They landed in France (via the D-Day beaches) in August 1944 and moved to Antwerp in September, then Eindhoven in late December, moving on into Germany in late April. The diaries rarely mention anything other than a few officers and the number of tanks serviced each day.

Since you are next of kin, you can obtain a copy of his service record for free via TNA – see the online research guide at **tinyurl.com/tna-guide-brit-sold-after-1918**.
Phil Tomaselli

1 BUTTONS
Nothing gives away a Second World War uniform more than a plastic button. They began replacing metal ones, as an economy measure, soon after the evacuation of Dunkirk, and by late 1941 were almost universally worn.

2 GOGGLES
Malbon is the only staff sergeant in the photograph equipped with a set of goggles, which seems to confirm that he was a driver of some kind. Perhaps he tested the armoured vehicles after they'd been serviced by his unit.

3 COVERALLS
The men are wearing dark-coloured coveralls with flaps covering their buttons. These can be done up to the throat to protect the uniform underneath from oil and other substances, suggesting that they work with transport or machinery.

4 INSIGNIA
Normal rank insignia (for a REME staff sergeant artificer, a hammer and tongs above sergeant's stripes) would be worn on their battledress so, to indicate rank, these men have what appear to be detachable labels on their coveralls.

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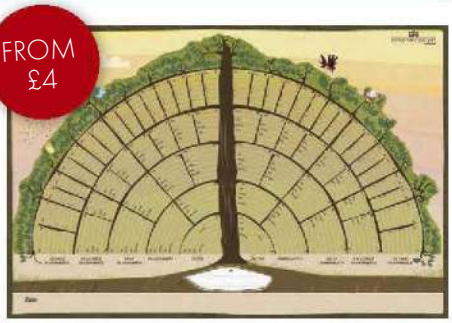

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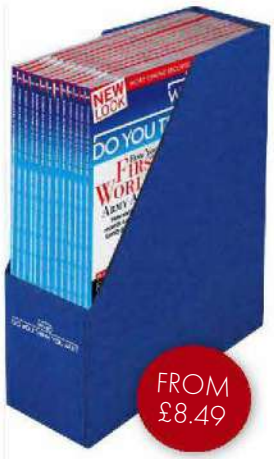

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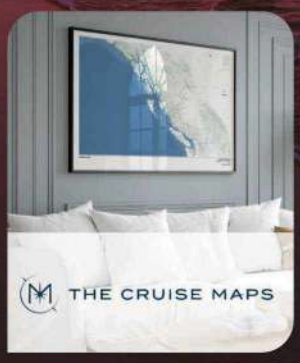

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THE BIG PICTURE

Celebrating our ancestors caught on camera

The Fortunes Of War

Paratroopers from the 3rd Platoon, 21st Independent Parachute Company, 1st Airborne Division prepare to fly from RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire, on Operation Market Garden, 17 September 1944

Operation Market Garden took place three months after the Allies' successful invasion of Normandy on D-Day, and the battlefield was further into occupied Europe: the Netherlands. Some 35,000 soldiers were dropped up to 60 miles behind enemy lines to capture nine bridges across the Rhine, unlocking a route to Germany for armoured and motorised brigades. Some 10,000 men from the British Army's 1st Airborne Division and the Polish 1st Independent Parachute Brigade were tasked with seizing the final three bridges at Arnhem, but their daring mission was beset by problems and resistance proved much heavier than expected. After several days' fighting, the division withdrew, and three quarters of its complement were killed or captured. In 1977 the Battle of Arnhem was depicted in the film *A Bridge Too Far*, which became a box-office hit.

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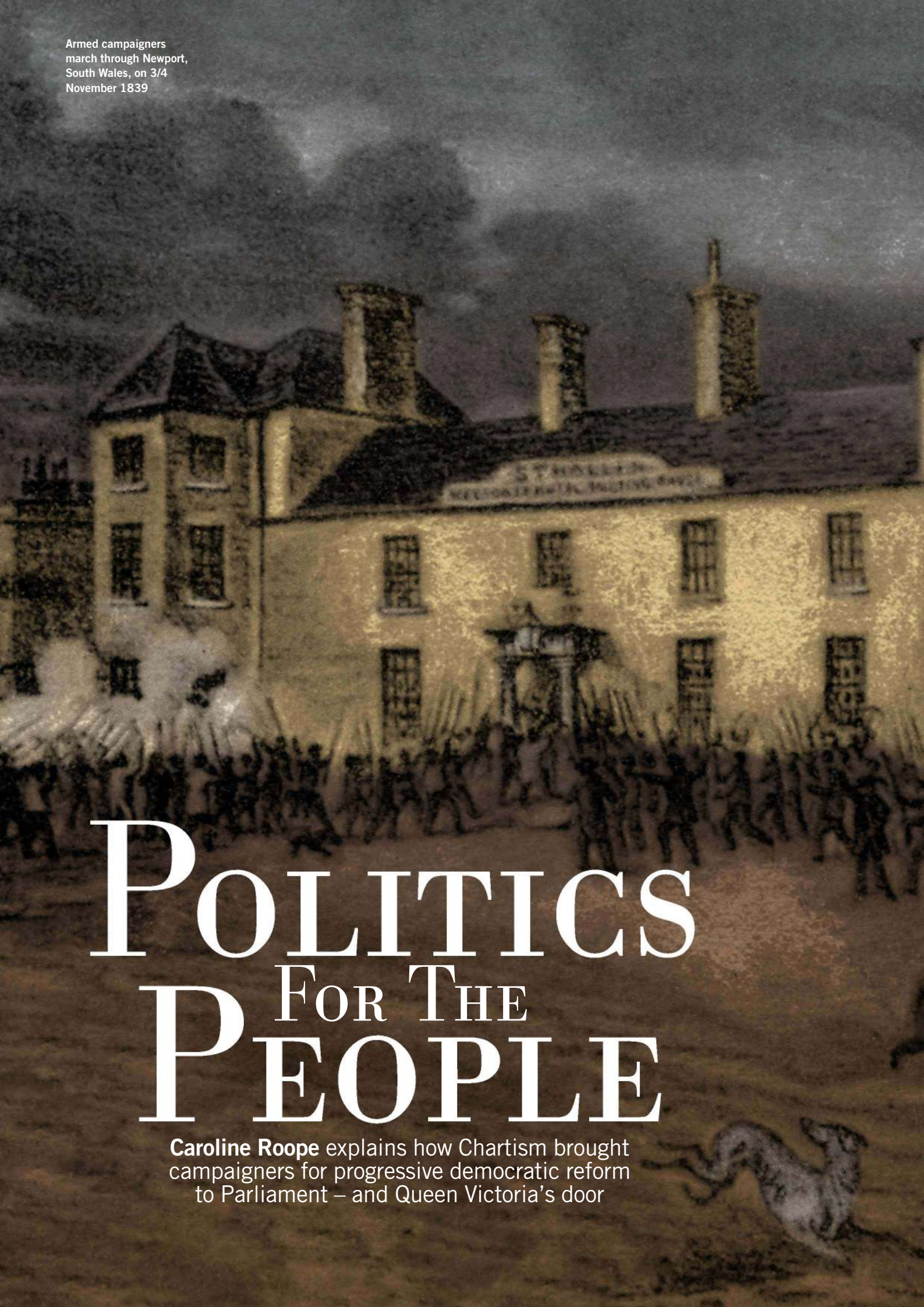

Armed campaigners march through Newport, South Wales, on 3/4 November 1839

Politics For The People

Caroline Roope explains how Chartism brought campaigners for progressive democratic reform to Parliament – and Queen Victoria's door

On 13 June 1848, Queen Victoria spent the day walking in the peaceful environs of Osborne House, her summer residence on the Isle of Wight. But on the mainland, political trouble had been brewing for some time. The Chartist movement, a working-class campaign for democratic reform and the extension of voting rights, had gained momentum since the beginning of the year, and the previous day saw simultaneous organised demonstrations across the country. Several violent skirmishes had already broken out during mass protests and riots. Luckily for Victoria, the Solent – the strait between the Isle of Wight and the mainland – provided a barrier between her royal domain and any disturbance. Or so she thought.

"There was an alarm…" Victoria wrote in her journal, "of 40 Chartists having come over to Cowes, with the intention of coming up here." A makeshift army was hastily cobbled together from Victoria's staff, including a group of labourers "armed with sticks" and the crew of the royal yacht *Fairy* armed with rifles. The men were "placed in readiness", Victoria recorded, but fortunately it "ended in nothing" and she was able to resume her walk. The *Aberdeen Herald* was feeling sanguine about the bluster. "The Twelfth of June has come and ▶

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gone, and there has been no Revolution in Great Britain," the newspaper reported later that week. "Queen Victoria has still her crown beside her and may put it on whenever she chooses." The *Herald* was also pleased to report that the House of Lords had "not been curtailed", and neither had the House of Commons "been dissolved". The riots and violence had not generated any direct reforms. It would be a further 70 years before full suffrage was achieved for men over the age of 21, and 80 years for women. In the summer of 1848, the Chartist movement really had "ended in nothing". Which prompts the question, what did the Chartist Movement achieve?

To address the disparity in the political system working-class men needed the vote

Widespread Support

Named after the People's Charter, a set of six reforms to make the UK political system more democratic, the Chartists drew supporters from industrial communities in northern England, the Midlands and the Welsh Valleys, as well as the working classes in the south of England. When Lord Grey's 1832 Reform Act failed to extend the vote beyond those who owned property, despite promising electoral reform, the betrayal cut deep. The situation was exacerbated by successive Whig governments and the now infamous 1834 Poor Law Amendment, which deprived the poor of outdoor relief, and created the workhouse system.

Social equality was desperately needed, but to address the disparity in the political system working-class men needed the vote. In 1836, an organised movement began to take shape when the London Working Men's Association (LWMA) was founded by John Cleave, Henry Hetherington, William Lovett and James Watson, plus the Carmarthen Working Men's Association in Wales by Hugh Williams.

A mass meeting of Chartists on Kennington Common, London, 10 April 1848

The first 'People's Charter' was drafted in 1838 and published by the LWMA. Gaining rights and political equality was top of the agenda, as well as ensuring constituencies were equal in size, elections occurred annually, and MPs could draw a salary – thus enabling working men to stand for Parliament alongside the wealthy.

They also campaigned for ballots to be held in secret. This was of particular importance in an age where votes were documented, and landowning MPs were also landlords. Such was the importance of secret balloting that the 1848 version of the People's Charter included a diagram showing how a room could be adapted for private voting, as well as a design for a "Ballot Box" – a wooden box containing a complicated system of dials to register the votes for each candidate (the charter has been digitised, and can be freely borrowed from the Internet Archive by visiting **tinyurl.com/arch-charter-1848**).

The LWMA used the press to publicise their aims, calling

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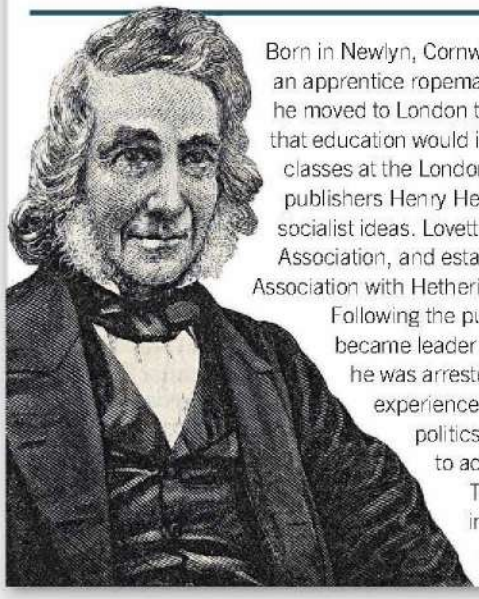
William Lovett 1800–1877

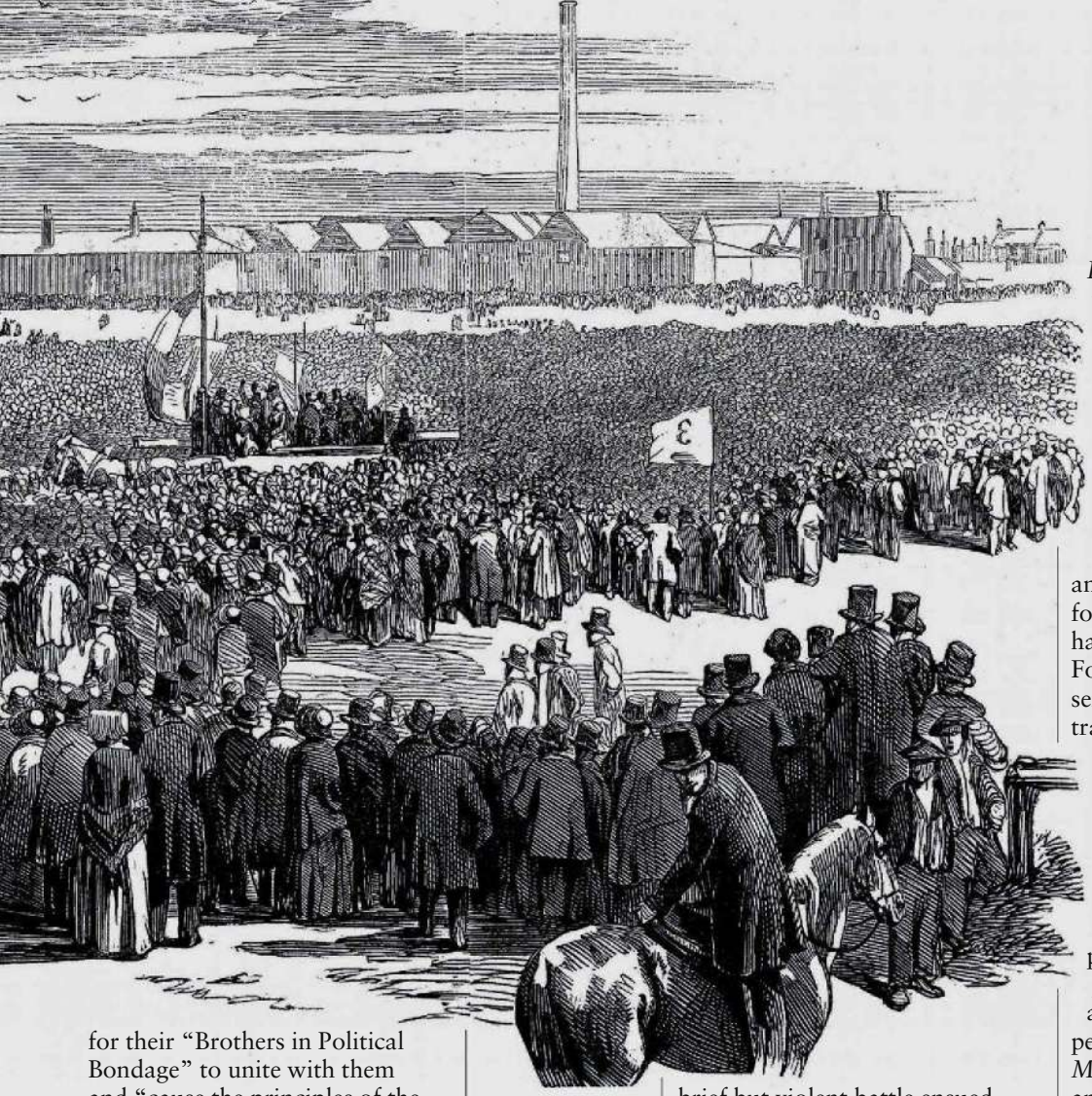
The Chartist leader was one of the best-known activists of his generation



Born in Newlyn, Cornwall, in 1800, William Lovett initially worked as an apprentice ropemaker before training as a carpenter, and at 21 he moved to London to find work as a cabinet-maker. Lovett believed that education would improve his prospects so he attended evening classes at the London Mechanics' Institute, where he met the radical publishers Henry Hetherington and John Cleave who introduced him to socialist ideas. Lovett became famous when he founded the Anti-Militia Association, and established the influential London Working Men's Association with Hetherington, Cleave and James Watson.

Following the publication of the People's Charter in 1838, Lovett became leader of the newly named Chartist movement. In 1839, he was arrested and spent 12 months in Warwick Gaol. The experience damaged his health and he decided to retire from politics and open a bookshop in London, while continuing to advocate for working-class education.

The business wasn't a success, and Lovett died in poverty in August 1877. His grave in Highgate Cemetery was Grade II-listed in 1999.



for their "Brothers in Political Bondage" to unite with them and "cause the principles of the 'People's Charter' to become the law of these realms".

National Convention

Following a number of well-attended meetings in the north of England where support for the movement was strongest, a National Convention took place in London in early 1839. Its aim was to present the first signed petition of 1.3 million working people to the House of Commons, but MPs overwhelmingly voted not to hear the petitioners. More drastic action was needed.

In Yorkshire and South Wales, where manufacturing and heavy industry dominated the landscape, anger at the situation began to manifest in physical force. On the night of 3/4 November 1839, several thousand armed supporters gathered on the outskirts of Newport and were led into the town by a local Chartist leader, John Frost. Frost's intention was to seize the town, preferably without bloodshed, and trigger a national uprising. A confrontation between armed soldiers and the Chartists took place at the Westgate Hotel. A brief but violent battle ensued, during which more than 20 Chartists were killed and 50 wounded. "It presents Chartism to us in a new form and a more dangerous and daring point of view," postulated the *Bristol Times and Mirror* in the ensuing days. "Just as we were beginning to forget that deluded combination, or to look back upon its bloodless musters and empty parades with amusement or contempt, it has started into new and malignant life."

Frost was arrested along with several other prominent leaders and found guilty of high treason, for which the sentence was to be hanged, drawn and quartered. Following a public outcry the sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

In the main, the Chartists tried to achieve their aims through peaceful means, such as submitting mass petitions and holding non-violent rallies. Working men were invited to join in "peaceful processions" which were publicised via flyers, posters, and in the Chartist press and periodicals such as *The Poor Man's Guardian* in the 1830s, and later *The Northern Star, and Leeds General Advertiser*. One of the largest demonstrations took place on Kennington Common, London, on 10 April 1848, where several thousand Chartists expressed their desperation. "We and our families are pining in misery, want, and starvation!" one advertising poster stated. "We are the slaves of capital – we demand protection to our labour. We are political serfs – we demand to be free."

The People's Charter is presented to the reforming statesman Lord John Russell, 1848

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Millions Of Signatories

Petitions were frequently signed by millions of working people, and the scale of support was the Chartists' main leverage with governments that opposed the reforms. In 1842, a petition was submitted with more than three million signatures, nicknamed the "monster petition" by the press. "The moral influence of such a document we do not attach any formidable or fearful consequences," reported the *Stockport Advertiser and Guardian* in May 1842, "but in our present social and commercial disarrangements, much danger is to be apprehended from its

Chartists occupy a church to protest against the stance of the church authorities, c1839

physical manifestation." The *Hertford Mercury* was equally concerned, describing the petition as "gigantic and portentous" and calling for "serious reflection" – but Parliament rejected it again.

This blow led to further unrest among the disenfranchised. Tensions were already heightened by an economic depression, the result of which was a wave of strikes across Britain's industrial heartlands. Although Chartism officially relied on constitutional methods to pressurise the Government, pockets of insurrectionary activity including damage to property and acts of violence repeatedly broke out during the 1840s. Several prominent Chartists were arrested, and imprisoned or sentenced to transportation.

Parliamentary Panic

Following news of a revolution in Paris in early 1848, Chartist activity gained momentum, leading to the planned demonstration on Kennington Common. To mitigate a similar revolutionary scenario in Central London, Parliament revived a centuries-old statute forbidding more than 10 people presenting a petition in person, as well as enacting new legislation that made certain intimidating activities crimes that were punishable by death. The Chartists saw the sense of panic as an indication that the Government were rattled. "The Metropolitan and City police were all called out, and nearly 4000 men concentrated around Kennington-common, leaving the rest of London to itself…" *The Northern Star, and Leeds General Advertiser* reported. "One hundred police spies in plain clothes mixed with the meeting, and eighty mounted policemen, armed with sabres and pistols, continually rode round the Common… the absurd and contemptible preparations of the government excited a great deal of merriment among the meeting."

The legislation and show of force had the desired effect, however, and the procession to Parliament to present the petition was cancelled. Instead it was sent there in three cabs, escorted by a number of leading Chartists.

Chartism declined after 1848, although pockets of support survived in some industrial communities into the 1850s. The reforms that the Chartists argued for were gradually enacted by successive governments. Of the six original reforms, five are now commonplace features of the British political system. None of the original Chartists lived long enough to see full reform, yet the People's Charter became one of the most famous political manifestos of 19th-century Britain, and the legacy of their relatively short-lived movement stretches far into the future.

CAROLINE ROOPE is a writer and researcher specialising in social history. Her latest book is *Nineteenth Century Female Explorers* (Pen & Sword, 2023)

Resources

Take your research further

BOOKS

Chartism: A New History
Malcolm Chase
Manchester University Press, 2007
Chase's in-depth study covers the movement's political activity.

The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution
Dorothy Thompson
Pantheon, 1984
This older but still relevant and easy-to-read text can be borrowed for free from the Internet Archive via **tinyurl.com/arch-chartists**.

The Life and Struggles of William Lovett
William Lovett
Trübner & Co., 1876
Lovett's autobiography is also available from the Internet Archive, as a free download (**tinyurl.com/arch-lovett**).

MUSEUM

PEOPLE'S HISTORY MUSEUM
a **Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3ER**
t 0161 838 9190
w **phm.org.uk**
The museum is home to banners, posters, artwork, placards and more, spanning four centuries of political reformation.

WEBSITES

BRITISH NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE
w **britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**
Here you will find reports of Chartist activity, demonstrations, riots and arrests. The archive also has the prominent Chartist publications *The Northern Star, and Leeds General Advertiser* and *The Poor Man's Guardian.*

CHARTIST ANCESTORS
w **chartistancestors.co.uk**
Mark Crail's website is full of information about the movement. You can also download a spreadsheet containing details of more than 14,000 Chartists.

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Mapping The Jews Of Islington

Rosemary Collins learns about a new history trail in North London

A guided walking tour of Islington visits the site of the former North London Synagogue (1868–1958)

The North London borough of Islington used to have one of the most prominent Jewish communities in the UK, yet its last synagogue closed down in 1967. However, the establishment of a local branch of the Chabad Lubavitch movement in 2011 has revived Jewish life in the borough.

"We've been very aware that there's this long, rich, interesting history of Jews in the borough that has been kind of lost, and not been adequately shared and recorded," says Rabbi Mendy Korer of Chabad Lubavitch Islington (**jewishislington.co.uk**).

In 2021 Chabad Lubavitch Islington received a grant from Untold Stories, a fund set up by the Mayor of London's office to support communities in sharing their stories with the city, to create a trail celebrating the borough's Jewish heritage. The research was conducted by Petra Laidlaw, historian and author of *The Jewish Communities of Islington, 1730s–1880s* (Islington Archaeology & History Society, 2013). In total the Islington Jewish Heritage Trail has a dozen sites, now marked by plaques recorded on a map available at libraries in the borough. They are each connected to an individual, or in one case a married couple, from one of the project's 12 themes – 'Architects', 'Artists & Musicians', 'Traders', 'Doctors & Scientists', 'Faith Leaders', 'Politicians', 'Prisoners', 'Refugees', 'Teachers & Academics', 'War Heroes', 'Inventors' and 'Writers & Journalists'. But there are so many notable Jewish figures from Islington that the accompanying website presents the stories of 46 people (**jewishislington.co.uk/untoldstories**).

There's this long, rich, interesting history of Jews in the borough

"When we were designing the tour, we decided quite early on that we wanted to show the plethora of the different types of people," Rabbi Mendy explains. "We've got Jews who came from different continents or different countries in Europe or elsewhere, both Sephardic and Ashkenazi, but also those in professions. We've got a doctor, a refugee, a war hero and a prisoner. We tried to make sure that we are fairly portraying all of the walks of life that you would find in any community."

Notable figures on the trail include George Elias Basevi (1794–1845), often referred to as Britain's first Jewish architect; Lily Delissa Joseph (1863–1940), an artist and suffragette imprisoned for her involvement in a window-smashing campaign; and Julius Vogel (1835–1899), who emigrated and became prime minister of New Zealand.

Some of the people on the website or their parents were born overseas and came to Britain to flee religious persecution, whether they were Sephardic Jews escaping the Spanish Inquisition in the 18th century, victims of the Russian pogroms in the 19th, or refugees from the Nazis in the 20th.

"The bigger, underlying question we were touching on is, at which point does an immigrant feel that London is their home, and that this is where they can live safely and prosper?" says Rabbi Mendy. "Have they thrived, have they survived? Some of their stories are heartwarming, but on the other hand some of them are tragic."

He reveals that he felt the need for the trail all the more when it opened in May: "It just happened to launch at quite a tense time internationally, and therefore for Jewish people living in the UK too. A project like this, where Jews can feel a sense of belonging, a sense of ownership and a sense of their history in a neighbourhood, has really been impactful to how people feel: things might be tense at the moment, but Islington is our home. The same way that people thrived in the borough in the past, we can keep thriving here today."

RABBI MENDY KORER

TELL YOUR STORY

Share your local history project with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *rosemary.collins@ourmedia.co.uk*

Find Out More

Chabad Lubavitch Islington
w **jewishislington.co.uk/untoldstories**

You can visit the project's website to request copies of the map and find out when guided walking tours are being held. If you have a story about Jewish history in Islington to contribute, please get in touch by emailing *info@jewishislington.co.uk*.

'I Wanted My Illegitimate Grandfather's Family To Know He Existed'

Chris Hussey has researched the life of his illegitimate grandfather Frank Herbert Stacey, identifying his father Frank Herbert Wells – then tracked down one of Wells' other descendants. By **Gail Dixon**

The 'Reader Story' in the Summer 2023 issue of *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* focused on Chris Hussey, whose great grandmother Caroline Ann Stacey was a lone parent in late Victorian times. Her son Frank Herbert Stacey was Chris' maternal grandfather.

Frank emigrated to Canada as a young man, and when the First World War broke out in July 1914 he enlisted into the Canadian 123rd Royal Grenadiers.

Frank fought on the Western Front at Vimy Ridge and after transferring into the 29th Infantry Battalion he fought at Hill 70 and Lens, where he endured a mustard-gas attack.

CHRIS HUSSEY works in security and lives in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. He is pictured here with his newly found relation, Sian

The sulphur burned his eyes, mouth, throat and lungs, and he suffered from breathing difficulties for the rest of his life.

Frank married Edith Brightman in 1927, and they had Chris' mother Jean Primrose in 1928. He passed away in 1948, and was greatly missed by Edith and Jean.

A historic newspaper article revealed Frank's biological father. Frank Herbert Wells was mentioned in a bastardy case brought forward by Caroline in 1895, although he married a woman named Mary Ann Gore in January 1894.

Frank and Mary Ann had four children, and Chris felt a powerful desire to find their living descendants and make contact.

There were many hurdles placed in his way, but his tenacity paid off, as Chris explains.

My Brick Wall

As a keen family historian, I have a duty to tell of my grandfather Frank Stacey's existence and explore his connections to the family he never knew. He was born in June 1894 in Macclesfield, and never got to know his father.

After DNA proved that Frank Herbert Wells was definitely Frank Stacey's father, I decided to research his life and found that he had four children with Mary Ann. I wanted to find the couple's great grandchildren, and tell them what happened all those years ago. My grandfather's life mattered,

Marriage Record, 1918

This record helped Chris research his father's half-brother Frank Sidney Wells, who changed his name to Sidney Gore

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1918. Marriage solemnized at Parish Church in the Parish of St James' Hatcham in the County of London

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
461	January Nineteen 1918	Sidney Frank James Gore	23	Bachelor	Soldier	10 St James'	James Frederick Gore (deceased)	Gentleman
		Melita Winifred Stephens	22	Spinster	—	10 St James'.	Elijah Stephens	Clerk

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the [illegible] Church by — or after Banns by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Sidney Frank James Gore, Melita Winifred Stephens

In the Presence of us, Elijah Stephens, Ernest [illegible]

[illegible] Davies Vicar

Any Correctional Notes must be written in this Margin. [illegible]

1918. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of St James' Hatcham in the County of London

1 The Groom's Father The marriage record gives the name of Sidney's father as James Frederick Gore.

2 Margin Note An addendum from the clerk says that Sidney's true father was Frank Herbert Wells.

3 The Bride Melita's will named her grandchildren, whom Chris has been able to contact.

and I didn't want his history to be lost. The challenge was to find these descendants, who could be anywhere in the world. I began searching in 2021, and couldn't find any direct connections via Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**). Two years passed, and I was still no closer to making a breakthrough.

My Eureka Moment

In 2023, I was browsing Ancestry and chanced upon a probate record for a Melita Winifred Stitson Gore, who died in East Sussex in 1978. Melita was the wife of Frank Sidney James Wells, Frank and Mary Ann's eldest son.

I thought it was a shame that no beneficiaries were mentioned in the probate record, but ordered Melita's will to see if it held further clues. Eureka! The will stated that she left her estate to her daughter-in-law Marjorie Lord and three grandchildren, John, Susan and Sian.

Finding them would not be simple, however. I mentioned my quest to a colleague at work who searched for the three names online, and sadly found an obituary notice for John.

I hesitated to contact Susan and Sian, because of the sensitive nature of the subject. Also, I wondered if they would even believe my story. However, I was confident that they were the relatives that I was searching for, so I went ahead and contacted the funeral director who was mentioned in the obituary.

My Breakthrough

I explained the whole story to an employee of the funeral company, who agreed to pass on an email from me to Susan and Sian, in the hope that they would get in touch.

I thought "I have to make this look good", so I sent a PDF of the article from *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* together with photos and contact numbers.

Two days passed, then the phone rang – it was Chris, Sian's husband, who is also a keen family historian. I felt overcome with emotion, and we talked for an hour about the family. Chris explained that he had a photo of Frank Sidney, who was my grandfather's eldest half-sibling. It's fascinating to note that Frank Sidney was born a fortnight after my grandfather, and that they shared the same first name.

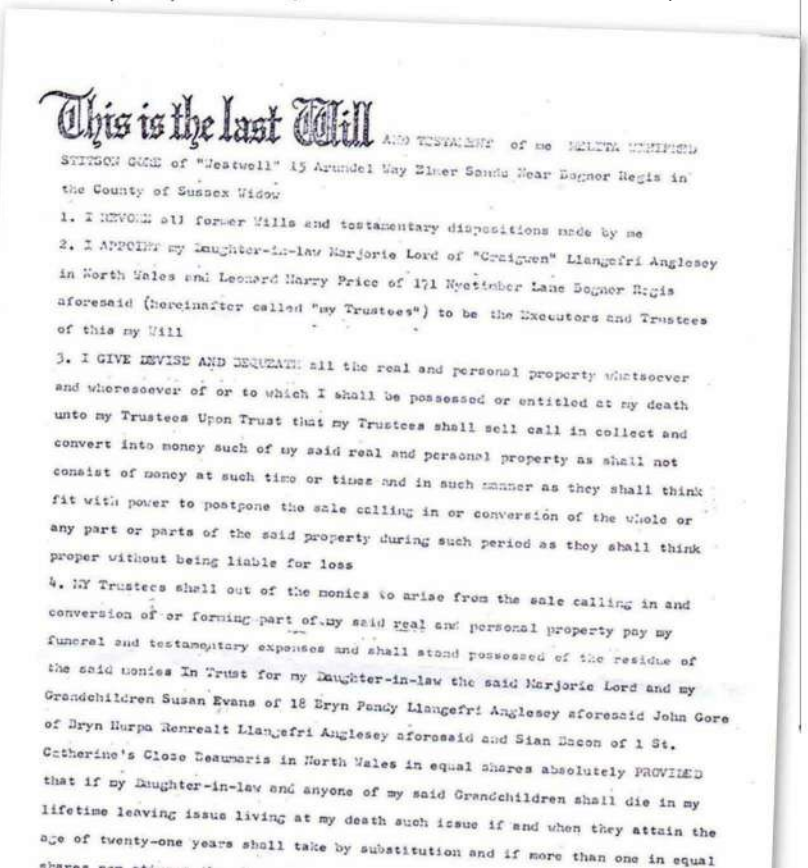
I met with Chris and Sian in April 2024, to exchange stories and photographs from the past. We compared pictures of the two half-brothers, Frank Sidney James Wells and Frank Herbert Stacey, taken when they were boys, and there was a striking resemblance.

Sian and Chris had researched the Wells family extensively, and were shocked to find out about my grandfather's existence.

Before leaving their house, I noticed that a photograph I had given them depicting my grandfather in his Canadian Army uniform was now on show on their dressing-room table.

Frank's life mattered and now, for future generations to come, he will be remembered as part of the Wells family.

Chris' grandfather Frank Herbert Stacey *(left)* and his half-brother Frank Sidney James Wells



This is the last Will AND TESTAMENT of me MELITA WINIFRED STITSON GORE of "Westwell" 15 Arundel Way Elmer Sands Near Bognor Regis in the County of Sussex Widow

1. I REVOKE all former Wills and testamentary dispositions made by me
2. I APPOINT my Daughter-in-law Marjorie Lord of "Craigwen" Llangefni Anglesey in North Wales and Leonard Harry Price of 171 Nyetimber Lane Bognor Regis aforesaid (hereinafter called "my Trustees") to be the Executors and Trustees of this my Will
3. I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH all the real and personal property whatsoever and wheresoever of or to which I shall be possessed or entitled at my death unto my Trustees Upon Trust that my Trustees shall sell call in collect and convert into money such of my said real and personal property as shall not consist of money at such time or times and in such manner as they shall think fit with power to postpone the sale calling in or conversion of the whole or any part or parts of the said property during such period as they shall think proper without being liable for loss
4. MY Trustees shall out of the monies to arise from the sale calling in and conversion of or forming part of my said real and personal property pay my funeral and testamentary expenses and shall stand possessed of the residue of the said monies In Trust for my Daughter-in-law the said Marjorie Lord and my Grandchildren Susan Evans of 18 Bryn Pendy Llangefni Anglesey aforesaid John Gore of Bryn Hurpa Penrealt Llangefni Anglesey aforesaid and Sian Bacon of 1 St. Catherine's Close Beaumaris in North Wales in equal shares absolutely PROVIDED that if my Daughter-in-law and anyone of my said Grandchildren shall die in my lifetime leaving issue living at my death such issue if and when they attain the age of twenty-one years shall take by substitution and if more than one in equal

Chris managed to track down Melita Gore's will, which named her daughter-in-law and three grandchildren

HAVE YOU BROKEN THROUGH A BRICK WALL?

Share your family story with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

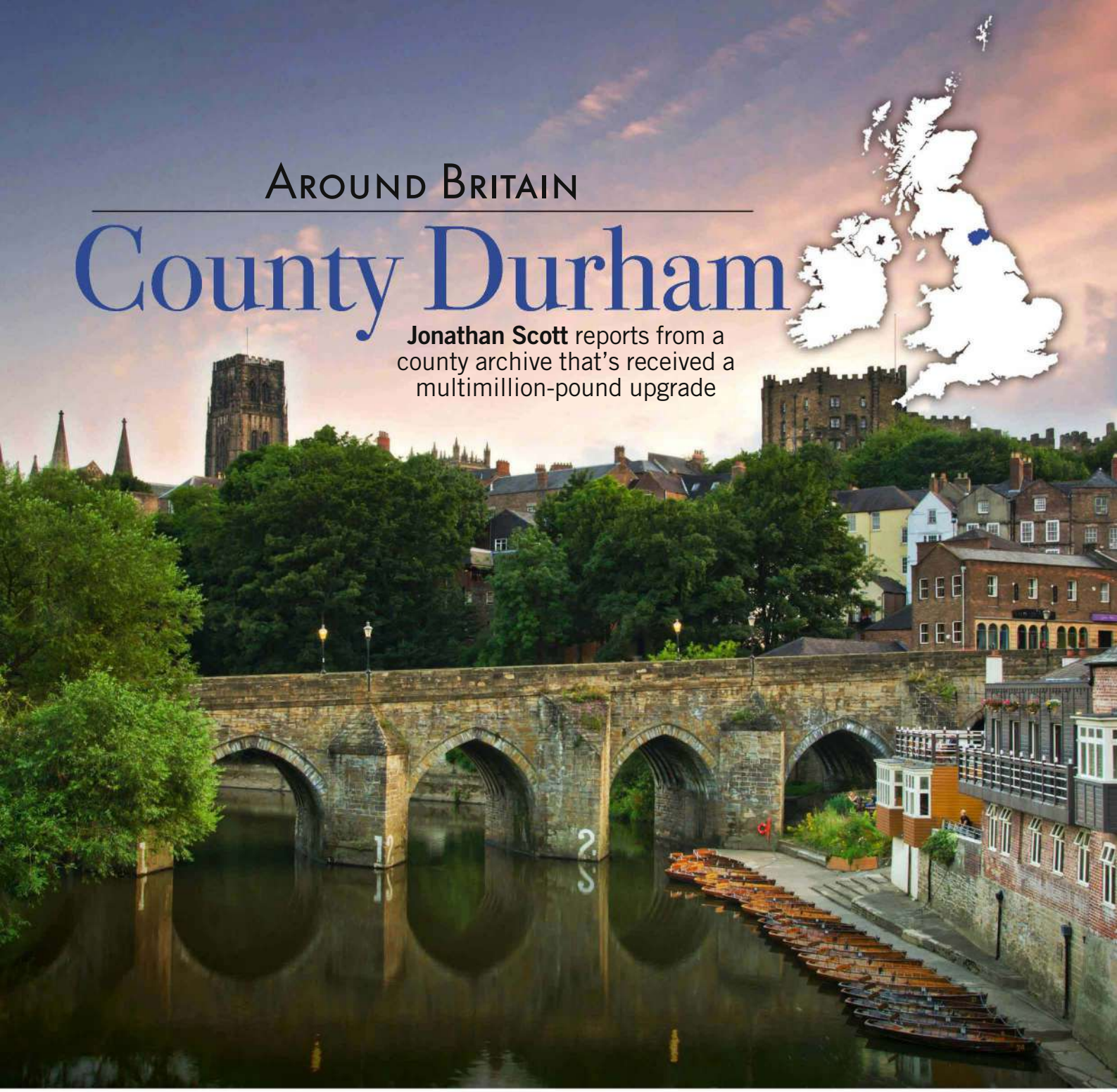
Reader Tips

Chris has this hard-won advice for other family historians

- An AncestryDNA test was a great help, because it confirmed that I had Wells blood in my veins, as did my grandfather Frank Stacey.
- If you keep hitting brick walls, take a break and have a rethink.
- Never stop asking questions. The answer is out there.

County Durham

Jonathan Scott reports from a county archive that's received a multimillion-pound upgrade



The Grade I-listed Elvet Bridge across the River Wear in the City of Durham

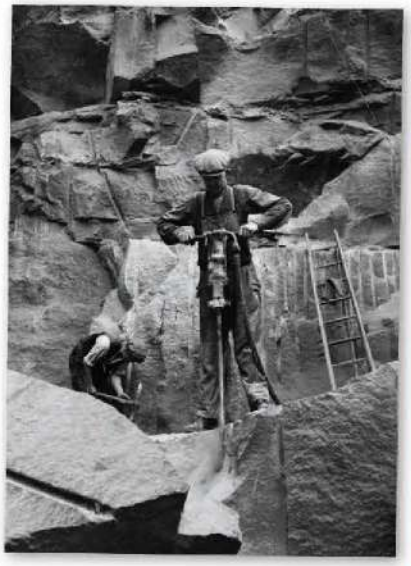
GETTY IMAGES

While County Durham is associated with mining and heavy industry, its industrial heritage includes mustard and carpet weaving. England's first dry mustard powder was originally created by a Mrs Clements of Durham in 1720. Some 60 years later a local weaving firm run by brothers John and Gilbert Startforth began producing Kidderminster and Venetian-type carpets. By the 1790s they had about 70 looms and 800 employees, and subsequently Hugh Mackay and Company (founded 1903) ensured that carpets continued to be manufactured in the city until the 21st century.

Much has changed since our last visit to this part of north-east England. Between November 2023 and May 2024 the county record office moved six miles of shelves to a new home on the outskirts of the City of Durham.

Mount Oswald Manor House was originally built for a London merchant named John Richardby c1800. Planning permission for The Story, a new one-stop shop for Durham's heritage services, was granted in 2020. The £23 million project was made possible through the European Union's European Regional Development Fund, the National Lottery, the charity the Wolfson Foundation and local land developer the Banks Group, which gifted Mount Oswald to Durham County Council. The impressive new website is located at **thestorydurham.org**.

Described by county archivist Carolyn Ball as a "triumph of old meets new", The Story combines the Grade II-listed building with a purpose-built extension, powered by 291 solar panels and 60 ground-source heat pumps.



Patrick Howard drills deep holes into the main rock at Springwell Quarry, 1951

The Story opened in mid-June with a weekend of historical re-enactments, pop-up theatre performances and live music. Alongside a permanent exhibition on the history of County Durham, the venue's first temporary exhibition, 'The Forgotten Battle', runs until October 2024 and explores the 1944 Battle of Kohima against the Japanese invaders in north-east India, fought by a British-Indian force including the 2nd Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI).

As well as the county archives, The Story looks after DLI material spanning the regiment's 300-year history; a local-studies collection; the historic registration collection of births, marriages and deaths; and the Historic Environment Record – including archaeological finds.

Cutting-Edge Facilities

Visiting researchers will spend most of their time on the first floor, where they'll find interactive viewing screens, 16 computer terminals, a collections room for viewing material from the strongrooms, and a separate reception area for inquiries relating to historic civil registration. On-demand access to the collections database and popular records such as church registers and newspapers is available digitally via the 'Search and Discover' space.

The new website incorporates AI tools to improve the results of the Collection Search (**thestory durham.org/our-collections/online-collection**). This is your way in to all sorts of digitised material, including several collections previously only available on microfilm. Testing with a common name like 'Scott' returned 2,026 results, starting with digitised images of soldiers from the DLI.

Other local records here include cemetery and crematorium registers, census returns, hearth-tax returns, electoral registers and newspapers. Quarter sessions were established in County Durham in 1345, the earliest surviving records dating from 1471, and the archive holds records from 1596–1971. This collection, which includes 18th- and 19th-century land-tax schedules, has been indexed and is searchable via the catalogue.

Among the most popular sources for genealogists are of course Church of England parish registers, which sit alongside a large collection of nonconformist material. Older examples sometimes feature incidental comments added by priests recording contemporary life. There's references to the plague in Durham City, a giant snake brought to a 16th-century market in the register for St Nicholas, and a grumble about bureaucracy imposed by Oliver Cromwell in a Hartlepool register from 1653, ending with the words "monster off nature and bloudy tyrant".

If you can't find a name in the parish registers, it's worth ▶

Soldiers from the Durham Light Infantry Territorial Army are inspected in front of Durham Cathedral, 1960

GETTY IMAGES

Free Online Records

Probate records, a database of coal miners, Bishops' Transcripts, directories and a roll of honour featuring Hartlepool seafarers are this month's unmissable resources

Bishops' Transcripts

w **bit.ly/fs-bts-durham**

FamilySearch includes 'England, Durham Diocese Bishop's Transcripts, 1639–1919' (images only). There's also a calendar of marriage bonds and allegations, with an index of brides, grooms and the 'bondsmen' (1594–1815).

Directories

w **bit.ly/spec-coll-durham**

The University of Leicester's website Special Collections Online has a dozen directories from the region, including a *Kelly's Directory of Durham* published in 1890.

Maritime Roll Of Honour

w **hhtandn.org**

The site Hartlepool History Then & Now includes a roll of honour naming local seafarers who were lost at sea.

Probate Records

w **familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/**

Here you can explore catalogued digital images of more than 150,000 wills and related archives from across County Durham, Tyne and Wear, and Northumberland (1527–1857).

Miners' Database

w **tinyurl.com/durham-depths**

The project Mining Durham's Hidden Depths has created indexes to the records of the Durham Miners' Association trade union, totalling 229,648 names.

trying the Bishops' Transcripts (BTs) – contemporary copies that were compiled annually and sent to the diocesan registry. Durham University's Palace Green Library looks after BTs for the area, alongside enclosure, tithe and land-tax records. The BTs cover County Durham and Northumberland parishes back to 1760, and images of the transcripts are on FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**). This diocesan collection also has marriage-licence allegations and bonds – again, pre-1900 examples are on FamilySearch.

Note that because of roofing works, the library will close intermittently between summer 2024 and spring 2025; for details, see the web page at **https://durham.ac.uk/things-to-do/venues/historic-libraries-at-palace-green/visit/tickets-and-times/**.

TOP TIP!

If a relation studied or taught at Durham University, you can explore a wealth of digitised university publications in the library's Archives and Special Collections at **tinyurl.com/dur-uni-lib-pub**.

Finding Online Resources

Via the library's genealogical portal at **https://libguides.durham.ac.uk/asc-family-history** you can find information and the latest news on sources. You can also try the search tool Discover, which allows researchers to filter material that is 'Available online' (**https://discover.durham.ac.uk/**).

Another powerful finding aid for family historians is the North East Inheritance Project (**familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/**), which took place in 2006–2010. The result was a digital image catalogue of more than 150,000 wills and related archives, again covering individuals from across County Durham, Tyne and Wear, and Northumberland, mainly dating from the 16th to the mid-19th century. These are searchable by name, place, occupation or date, and link to digital images of the wills, mostly held on FamilySearch.

The largest settlement in the ceremonial county is Darlington, which is administratively independent from County Durham, as are the boroughs of Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees. As a result there are several local-history libraries across the region that may hold vital documentary evidence, including school records, nonconformist church material, plus parish and state sources on microfiche. Other useful local-history sources relating to 'ancient' County Durham may also be found in the Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums (for the Gateshead, South Shields and Sunderland area; **twmuseums.org.uk**) and the Teesside Archives (for Stockton and Hartlepool; **https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/leisure-culture-and-parks/teesside-archives/**).

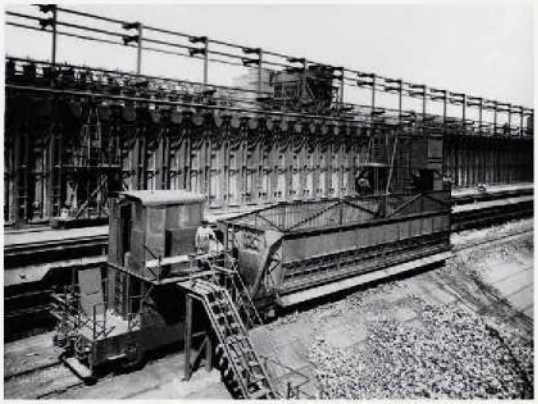
Finally Newcastle Local Studies, which boasts the "largest collection of local studies and family history materials in the Northeast", also has some material covering Durham and Northumberland, including register transcripts and memorial inscriptions. You can find out more via **newcastle.gov.uk/services/libraries-culture/history-and-heritage/local-studies-and-family-history**.

A British Railways poster from c1950 promoting rail travel to the City of Durham

GETTY IMAGES

LOCAL INDUSTRY

Iron And Steel Did your relation help make Consett famous worldwide?



The company's Fell Coke Works in Consett opened in 1924

Over 140 years the firm variously known as Consett Iron Works and Consett Steel Works powered this Durham town into becoming one of the world's leading centres of iron and steel making. The county archive looks after material charting the history of the company back to its formation in 1864, and you can search the collection via Durham Record Office's online catalogue: **durhamrecordoffice.org.uk/search-options/search-the-catalogue/**. There is also a timeline about iron and steel production in Consett and other material at the website History of Consett Steelworks: **historyofconsettsteelworks.wordpress.com**.

COUNTY DURHAM DIRECTORY

ARCHIVES & LIBRARIES

The Story

a **Mount Oswald, South Road, Durham DH1 3TQ**
t 0300 0268888
e *collections@thestorydurham.org*
w **thestorydurham.org**

Durham Record Office reopened as The Story in June 2024. Its website includes search pages broadly subdivided by archives, local studies, registrars, the Durham Light Infantry and archaeology. It has material relating to mining, manufacture and railways, alongside parish and nonconformist registers, as well as census, birth, marriage and death records. Information, research guides (including lists of service personnel from the world wars) and search tools are still available at **durhamrecordoffice.org.uk**, but will move to The Story's website in due course.

Darlington Centre For Local Studies

a **Darlington Library, Crown Street, Darlington DL1 1ND**
t 01325 349630
e *local.studies@darlington.gov.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/darlington-ls**

The centre has parish registers for the Borough of Darlington and surrounding areas on microfilm, burial records, directories, plus memorial inscriptions compiled by the Cleveland Family History Society (see below).

Durham Cathedral Library

a **The College, Durham DH1 3EH**
t 0191 386 2489
e *library@durhamcathedral.co.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/dur-cath-lib**

The cathedral archive stretches back to 1083 and includes letters, account books and deeds, alongside copies of documents with national significance.

Durham Clayport Library

a **8 Millennium Place, Durham DH1 1WA**
t 03000 265524
e *durhamclayportlibrary@durham.gov.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/dur-clay-lib**

The census returns, parish registers and newspapers held here have now been transferred to The Story, and you can explore millions of photos at **durham.gov.uk/durhamrecord**.

Durham University Archives And Special Collections

a **Barker Research Library, Palace Green Library, Palace Green, Durham DH1 3RN**
t 0191 334 2276
e *pg.library@durham.ac.uk*
w **dur.ac.uk/library/asc**

There's an image catalogue of more than 150,000 wills (1527–1857) via the North East Inheritance Project (**familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/**). Bishops' Transcripts are also on FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**).

Gateshead Archive

a **Central Library, Prince Consort Road, Gateshead NE8 4LN**
t 0191 433 8430
e *libraries@gateshead.gov.uk*
w **gateshead.gov.uk/article/9647/Local-history**

The website includes a roll of honour from the First World War.

South Tyneside Local And Family History Centre

a **The Word, 45 Market Place, South Shields NE33 1JF**
t 0191 427 1818
e *enquiries@theworduk.org*
w **https://theworduk.org/explore/archives/**

You can explore 18,000 digitised images via **southtynesidehistory.co.uk**, and read about those involved in the First World War at **southtynesideremembers.org.uk**.

Sunderland Local History Library

t 0191 561 5660
e *local.historylibrary@sunderland.gov.uk*
w **sunderland.gov.uk/local-history**

Here you can download fact sheets about local history. A "digitally reimagined local studies offer" will open in the new Culture House building in summer 2025.

Teesside Archives

a **Dorman Museum, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough TS5 6LA**
t 01642 248321
e *teesside_archives@middlesbrough.gov.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/teeside-arch**

The archive holds material for Stockton-on-Tees and Hartlepool, including shipping registers from ports once in County Durham.

Tyne & Wear Archives

a **Discovery Museum, Blandford Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4JA**
t 0191 277 2248
e *archives@twmuseums.org.uk*
w **twmuseums.org.uk/tyne-and-wear-archives**

Visit the archive for material from areas of County Durham that are now located in Tyne and Wear – parts of Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

GROUPS & SOCIETIES

Cleveland Family History Society

w **clevelandfhs.org.uk**

The society covers the old county of Cleveland and part of County Durham and North Yorkshire.

Northumberland And Durham Family History Society

w **ndfhs.org.uk**

The society has a research centre in Newcastle upon Tyne. Members can access online indexes to about three million baptisms, marriages and burials.

MUSEUMS

Beamish Museum

a **Regional Resource Centre, Beamish DH9 0RG**
t 0191 370 4000
e *museum@beamish.org.uk*
w **beamish.org.uk**

Some of the material this open-air museum holds is online: **collections.beamish.org.uk**.

Durham Mining Museum

a **c/o Spennymoor Town Council, Town Hall, Spennymoor DL16 6DG**
t 01388 810597
e *durhamminingmuseum@gmail.com*
w **dmm.org.uk**

The museum's website includes a colliery index, lists of companies, and a database of accidents.

WEBSITES

Ancestry

w **bit.ly/anc-durham**

The local material here includes Tyne and Wear nonconformist records, Bishops' Transcripts and marriage bonds and allegations.

Durham Records Online

w **durhamrecordsonline.com**

This website has over 4.3 million parish and census records.

Findmypast

w **bit.ly/fmp-durham**

Local highlights include Bishops' Transcripts transcribed from collections at Durham University, and school records up to 1914.

Student newspaper, 1968

Marion McClintock of Lancaster University Archives shares a copy of a student newspaper published in the university's early days Interview By Rosemary Collins

Seven brand-new universities opened in England between 1961 and 1965 during a decade in which access to higher education expanded dramatically. One of those, Lancaster University, admitted its first students in October 1964 and celebrates its 60th anniversary this month. Here, honorary university archivist Marion McClintock tells us more about a document from the university's archives – a copy of the student newspaper *John O'Gauntlet* from 1968.

Lancaster had an early reputation for being radical and left wing

Why Did You Choose The Newspaper?

As Lancaster University prepares to celebrate its 60th anniversary on 13–15 September, a look back at our early years through the student newspaper *John O'Gauntlet* shows us how the second cohort of our students viewed the university and the wider world. The Summer Term of 1968, the issue selected, marks a key stage. It points up the era of student protests, international and local, and the whole of page 7 is devoted to differing perspectives of uprisings in Paris and elsewhere.

This issue also marks the end of the fourth year of the university, and patterns are emerging of debates that would continue for many years. These include an article discussing whether teaching by one-on-one tutorials is worth it, and a humorous article on selling encyclopedias door-to-door, which the writer describes as "a marketing process which results in students selling books they can't respect in a way they can't respect to people they can't respect".

There is also a nice tongue-in-cheek article by Lancaster graduate Frank Reeves about his travails at a teacher-training college (not named, but clearly S. Martin's College, also in Lancaster, founded at the same time as the university). He notes wryly that *John O'Gauntlet* readers will be glad to know he has "only once been in serious trouble since I came here", for so-called "tomfoolery and hooliganism" in dressing up to make a short film.

All in all it is an issue that well sums up the high level of involvement of students at a then small institution where everyone knew everyone else, where there was much informal interaction between students and senior officers, and where people did not take themselves too seriously.

What Does It Tell Us About Student Life?

First, it's important to gain a visual impression of this student production: the heavy typeface, the tabloid format, the clenched-fist logo at the top of page 3, but also the beehive hairstyles and long dresses of the girls, and the bow ties and formal attire of the boys, in pictures of the Graduation Ball. The whole issue is in black and white, with a lot of heavy reading.

The students' political consciousness comes through strongly. Lancaster had an early reputation for being radical and left wing, which is apparent here, although it always had Conservative student activity as well. Not only are student international protests fully covered, but there are two densely written book reviews from the Radical Left. The first is by David Craig, a senior lecturer in English and a Marxist. He discusses the New Left's *May Day Manifesto 1968* (Penguin, 1968), edited by Raymond Williams, as it "puts the case for a concerted effort to swing British politics onto a path of struggle towards a better social order". The second is a student review of the second volume of *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell* (George Allen and Unwin, 1968), including his complex responses to warfare and his early Puritanism.

But there are also glimpses of fascinating internal politics. Compulsory dining was a hot topic in the days before kitchen areas were built into the colleges. There is a student letter opposing enforced refectory meals, as to "compel all residential students to buy such meal tickets would be an unprecedented act of imposition". Another dispute was about the Chaplaincy Centre, where the Jewish community had made a significant contribution towards the cost of the building but were confronted with three crosses at its summit. The concluding solution, still in place today, was to remove the highest cross and leave a single spike, but the correspondence on this issue is heated and illuminating about student attitudes to other faiths and towards mutual understanding and tolerance.

And finally we find an advertisement for the

Visit Us

Lancaster University Archives
a Lancaster University Library, Bailrigg, Lancaster LA1 4YH
t 01524 592516
e *library@lancaster.ac.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/lanc-uni-arch**

The archive's material covers such topics as teaching, research, student administration and welfare, governance, finance and fundraising, risk, legal affairs, and estates and facilities. Note that visits are by appointment only.

NOT TO BE REMOVED FROM THE LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY 26 JUN 1968 LANCASTER

JOHN O' GAUNTLET

No. 41 Price 6d.

Summer Term 1968

FIRST YEAR COMPULSION

It is unfortunate that in these last few days of term, when student life is disorganised by examinations and the prospects of the vacation, that the crisis over the refectories should have arisen. However, it has arisen, and it is imperative that the affair be resolved before the end of term after which the student body will be unable to raise its voice.

The origins of the refectory problem lie in the decision of the University Grants Commission to no longer write off refectory losses. Because of this decision, a committee, chaired by Professor Simpson of the Operational Research Department, was set up to make recommendations to the Catering Policy Committee. The Colleges, each of which is responsible for the profit and loss of its own catering policy, are represented on this committee.

The Simpson Committee reported on 6th June, in the middle of undergraduate exams, and suggested:

(a) a rationalisation of catering policy such that only one refectory per day would serve only one main meal per day.

(b) this meal, which would cost 5/- would be compulsory for all resident students. Those without meal tickets would not be sure of being able to get a meal.

It was hoped that the combination of a high price which compulsory meals would enable the refectories to at least break even.

The student reaction to these proposals was at first non-existant. Bowland Management Committee accepted the proposals on 10th June and passed them on to Bowland Syndicate for final approval: the undergraduate representatives on the Management Committee, Dave Brown and Andy Davey did not bother to turn up.

At Bowland Syndicate meeting on 12th June, Roger Ward, Secretary of Bowland College, persuaded the Syndicate to set up a working party to look into the proposals.

By this time, however, Lonsdale College had accepted the proposals, without any J.C.R. consultation whatsoever, and apparently with no resistance from Richard Kottler, Lonsdale's President, or the Lonsdale Student Executive.

Last night's Lonsdale J.C.R. meeting was the only Lonsdale reaction and was perhaps too late.

On Monday, 17th June, the Federation rejected the idea of compulsory meal tickets and endorsed proposals concerning cheaper, voluntary meal tickets put forward by Bowland Syndicate's working party, which were based on alternative figures to those used by Professor Simpson.

Immediately after the Federation Meeting, there was a Catering Policy Meeting which came to no decision over compulsory meal tickets, owing to the opposition of Chairman of the Federation, Peter Naughton, and the facts and figures of the report of Bowland's working party weilded by Roger Ward.

The whole affair is now back in the hands of the Colleagues and the students.

It is reported that the Vice-Chancellor, who is the Chairman of the Catering Policy Committee "is not pleased" with the whole affair. Mr. Glenton, the Catering Manager, did not feel that he had time to talk to J.O.G. or to make a comment.

It seems likely that there will be another meeting of the Catering Policy Committee next Thursday, the day before the end of term, at which alternative proposals for economically viable refectories, other than compulsory, highly priced meals, will be discussed. The major issue of the moment is what the College J.C.Rs will do at their meetings before this date.

So far, as usual, it is the Student Executive of Bowland College who have been making all the running and offering all the resistance and alternative proposals. All non-Bowland members of the Federation owe to them a debt of thanks. Bowland J.C.R. meets again tonight to affirm their confidence in their working party proposals, and Roger Ward told J.O.G. "I will be very disappointed if we lose this issue after putting up such a good fight. But neither I nor Bawland J.C.R. can continue to fight by ourselves. We must have unanimous support to prevent compulsory meal tickets for next year's first year residents".

QUOTABLE

"It's about time we let sleeping students lie."

AN ANONYMOUS JOURNALIST

● *Carrying the Banner*

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

The International Festival organised by the International Society was more of an experiment than anything else. It was thought of initially as an idea for the future until someone came up with some ideas and a plan — suddenly we found that it was going to take place after all.

It was decided that it would last three days — a day for Asia, one for Africa and one for the West, with permanent exhibitions etc., at lunch time, films in the afternoon and some form of entertainment in the evening with a grand barbecue at the end to finish it all.

Embassies and individuals provided the exhibits, but as far as speakers were concerned, the Embassies let us down. The concert went better than expected despite the rain. It is difficult to decide what the highlight of the evening was, but the Ugandans, Polish and Scots must be congratulated and thanked for adding colour to the performances, and Mike Waller and his Russian singers for singing on to the bitter end while the elements battled on.

It must be pointed out that Don Porter, a non-member of the Society, was the brains behind the whole affair while members and non-members contributed much in the way of time and energy. It is also obvious that the success of this year's festival was largely due to the great efforts and time expended by Misses Poncelet and Scotland in particular.

The Society hopes to make this an annual event as there seems to have been a better response than was anticipated — it will probably be at a different time of the year and better organised — one does learn from one's mistakes.

The International Society wishes to thank all Staff and Students who have co-operated and helped in so many ways and hope that they will be around to help again next year.

A GOOD GAME

(for W. Hickey)

Snake charmers of the east
like newspapermen of the west
are in the same game
it's a good game
without rules
captivating fools is.

M. P. WOOLF.

Landladies feel the pinch

Morecambe landladies are reported to be very perturbed by the news that the number of students in lodgings is going to fall over the next two or three years. Mr. Leslie Magson, Secretary of the Morecambe Hotel and Caterers Association told the Gauntlet that landladies had not expected the number of students in digs to decrease, in fact they had hoped that they would continue to increase. The fall in demand, even though temporary, was a "major setback" said Mr. Magson. "There might be repercussions — landladies might decide not to have students at all".

Asked what he thought of a landlady student relations, Mr. Magson replied that the teething troubles of student accommodation were now over. Landladies had always extended a welcome to students, and tried to make lodgings into a "home from home" for them.

Questioned about the attitude of landladies to the present lodgings tariff, Mr. Magson was unable to make any comment. He did stress however that the landladies considered that the reduction in their recent claim for an increase of ten shillings a week, to five shillings, was a "major concession".

THE REMINISCENCE BIT

The academic year of 1967-68 is coming to its end examination results are slowly being published, and Lancaster University's second generation of Undergraduates are preparing to go down for the last time.

The University has evolved beyond belief since the present graduands first arrived. For their first year they were taught exclusively at St. Leonard's Gate, and Bailrigg site was merely a mound of red mud which defied the suggestion that within two years a thriving University would rest upon it.

The arrival of these students was marked by the first major conflict that the University experienced — the Lodgings Crisis. During this affair, the students refused almost to a man to pay their lodgings bills until a consultative committee had been set up to look at prices, and a promise of future consultation had been elicited. The new students, without at first understanding what was going on, gave their full support to preserve unity and maintain militancy. The small beginning started a movement which will almost certainly culminate next year in student representation on Senate.

The students who will graduate this year have seen other developments apart from those in buildings and representation. They have seen over their three years the fundamental change in the language of students. It has been in the past three years that the Radical Student Alliance was founded, and its demands, if not its organisation, accepted throughout the student world. It has been in the past three years that Student Power has become a force to be reckoned with, and student concern with society has reached its peak. Whatever their academic attainment, this year's graduates will at least take down with them a handful of interesting memories.

There remains little to say except that this newspaper wishes those leaving the campus the best of luck in their future lives, and that thanks are due to all of them that contributed anything towards making the University of Lancaster a better or more interesting place to live.

famous quality beers

WM YOUNGER'S TARTAN KEG BITTER

SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE BREWERIES LTD.

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What Other Material Do You Hold?

We have the complete records of how the university came into being. These include documents lodged with us by Lancashire County Council as its senior officers worked long hours in the early 1960s to bring a university to Lancashire and to make it a success. There are plentiful accounts of the building programme, as well as the development of academic programmes, and a wealth of discussions ranging from how to name the colleges to the installation of the first chancellor, Princess Alexandra, who remained in post for 40 years. In addition to *John O'Gauntlet*, we have the rival magazine *Carolynne* as well as a lot of student ephemera. It is a rich early view of the student perspective, of strategic planning and governance, and of the financial stresses and pressures of setting up a new and innovative university in the north-west of England.

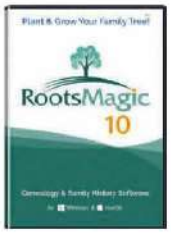
REVIEWS

The latest books on history and genealogy, plus apps, podcasts and websites

RootsMagic 10

SOFTWARE

From £29.95 (upgrade £24.95); **rootsmagic.co.uk**



It's that time of year when we're rewarded with a new version of RootsMagic, and while version 10 isn't groundbreaking, it has some notable new features that make the upgrade worthwhile for existing users.

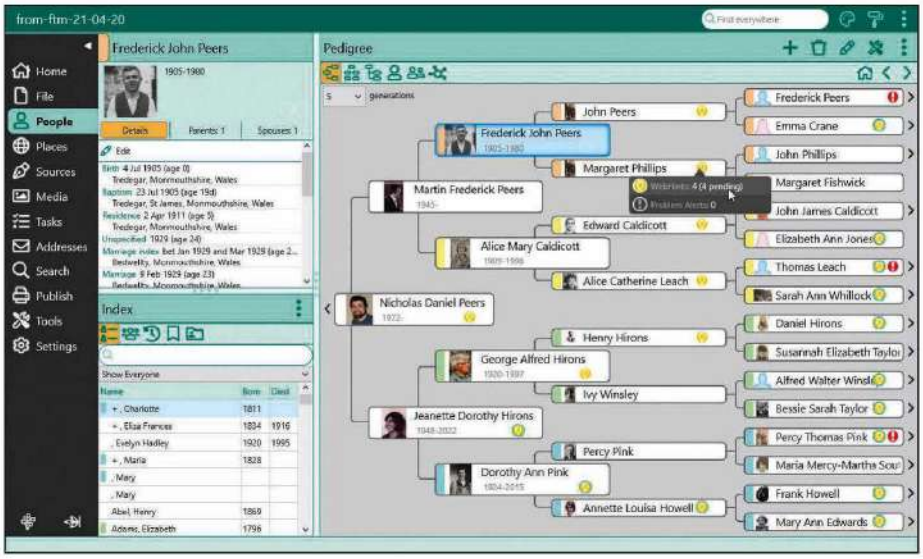
The major new highlight sees new options added that allow you to record individuals' health conditions and DNA match data, plus generate reports on each. Both features work in a similar way, and require you to enter the information manually.

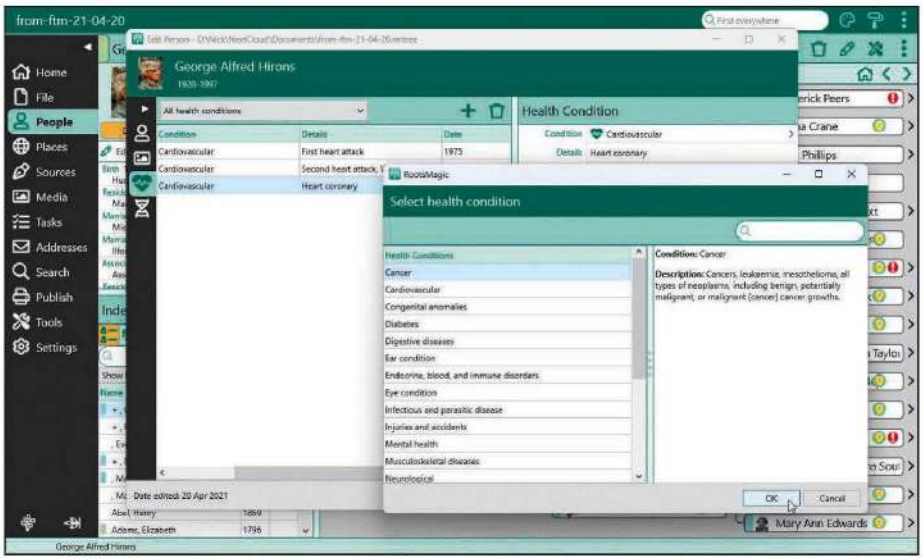
RootsMagic users have welcomed the new DNA feature in particular, but have highlighted some shortcomings: you can't attach any media files to the information, and there's nowhere to capture Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) information other than in the notes. Nevertheless, it comes with some useful analytical capabilities, such as viewing tree relationships and predicted DNA relationships together.

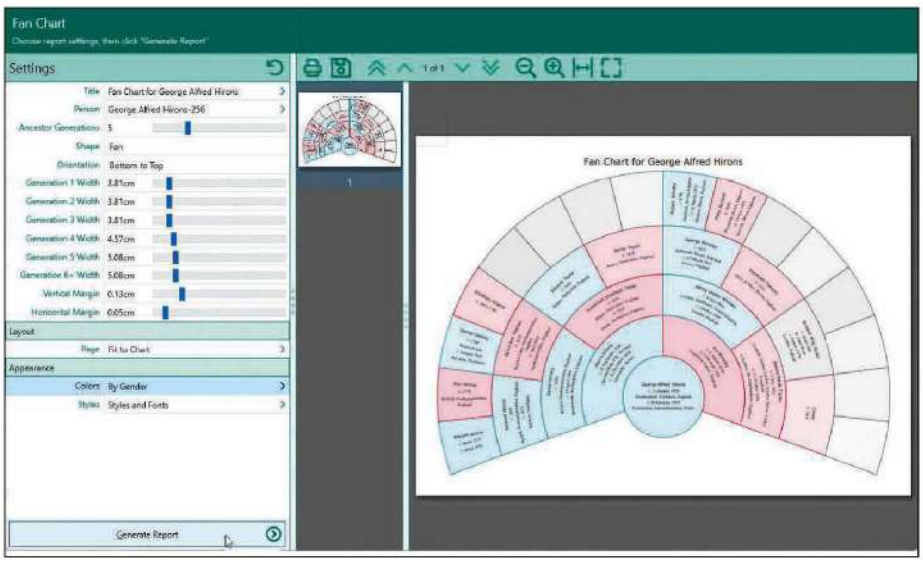
Searching is also improved, with new options added to the advanced search such as family line and genetics, and an option to search by proof of facts. This is the tip of the iceberg in what is an extensive list of tweaks, enhancements and minor new additions, but once again, there's nothing here particularly notable.

That said, existing users will find plenty here to tempt them into upgrading, while switchers will discover a tool that – despite being a little dated-looking and lacklustre in places, specifically its image-management tools and lack of visually appealing charts – still represents excellent value for money. Highlights include the ability to integrate your tree with Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) and Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**), a powerful set of maintenance and repair tools, and space to record lots of information about each and every family member. Recommended.

Nick Peers is a family historian and software expert, and writes *WDYTYA? Magazine*'s regular 'Tech Tips' articles







Top to bottom: RootsMagic 10's user interface is identical to previous releases – functional rather than slick; you can now record both DNA and health-related information about your relations; the charts don't have much visual appeal

DIGITAL PICKS

Rosemary Collins highlights three digital resources that caught our eye this month

LISTEN

Sliced Bread: DNA Ancestry Tests

bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0020xzb

In this episode of Radio 4's consumer programme *Sliced Bread*, Greg Foot looks at the popularity of DNA tests for family history. With the help of DNA genealogist Louise Baldock and professor of genetics Mark Jobling, he asks: how do they work, are they accurate, and can you trust the companies with your DNA? He also takes two DNA tests himself, and shares the results.

WEBSITE

The Secret Library

secretlibraryleeds.net

Leeds Libraries' heritage blog shares a wide variety of fascinating historic stories – some with a connection to the city, some found in books in the libraries' collections. Recent themes include LGBT+ pioneers in the field of medicine, and Leeds men who fought in the American Civil War. There's also a useful set of family history resources, including helpful advice and worksheets for recording family members' details.

PODCAST

Jersey Heritage

jerseyheritage.org/learn/podcasts/

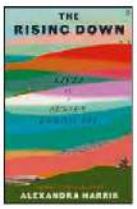
If you have roots in Jersey, or are just interested in the island's rich history, then you won't want to miss this free podcast from Jersey Heritage, with episodes on topics including food history, executions and the island's links to the slave trade.

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

The Rising Down
Lives In A Sussex Landscape

SUSSEX

Alexandra Harris
Faber & Faber, 512 pages, £25



This is a remarkable and perhaps unique book, beautifully written, poetic and lyrical, and the product of an inspired imagination. Alexandra Harris writes about the Pulborough and Fittleworth area of West Sussex, rooting the account in her extensive research into archives and secondary sources, but overlaying and interweaving factual background with evocative description and careful conjecture. Her focus shifts from people to place and back again, as she tells the stories of local residents (including her own younger self) and visitors to the area, creating a tapestry of landscape, geology, natural history, buildings, fields and especially the River Arun, threading through the text as it flows through the meadows and marshes.

This is neither a family history nor a local history. It is a powerful and wide-ranging account of the interaction between people and place, from Anglo-Saxon wall paintings to a Tudor water bailiff and Polish refugees in the 1940s, and much more besides. Read it and you will begin to speculate about your own area: who made the glass in the church, walked along those lanes, toiled at that factory, emigrated from that hamlet? It's a magical read, and not just for the fortunate people of Sussex.

Alan Crosby is the editor of *The Local Historian* and *WDYTYA? Magazine*'s regular columnist

Reader Review YOUR CHANCE TO ASSESS THE LATEST BOOKS

The Quality Of Love Twin Sisters
At The Heart Of The Century

FAMILY MEMOIR

Ariane Bankes
Duckworth, 288 pages, £18.99

This book is primarily about the adult lives of author Ariane Bankes' mother Celia Paget and her identical twin sister Mamaine during the dramatic middle decades of the 20th century. It is based on the letters that the sisters wrote to each other, which were kept by the author's mother.

Of generations of landed gentry, Celia and Mamaine were orphaned by the age of 12 years. They were close to each other in childhood, but separated for long periods during their adult lives.

The multilingual sisters, devoted twins, as adults were the spouses, lovers or friends of some of the century's most renowned writers and intellectual thinkers, including George Orwell, Albert Camus and Arthur Koestler.

The Quality Of Love: Twin Sisters at the Heart of the Century lives up to its author's desire to be "a faithful family memoir", and the words of the author's mother in the letter informing Camus of her aunt's death are eternal in nature – "love is the one thing which gives life a meaning and makes it worthwhile to have lived".

I recommend the book to the reader.

The fascinating lives of twins Mamaine and Celia Paget are the focus of the new book by Celia's daughter Ariane Bankes

Andrew Innes, Stevenage
Andrew has been researching his own and his wife's family histories for 54 years

Join Us... Send us an email if you'd like to join our reviewing panel e *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

TV & RADIO

Jonathan Wright previews upcoming programmes on history and family history

Who Do You Think You Are?

BBC One and BBC iPlayer
Thursday 12 September

Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill encounters a story of slavery in her episode of *WDYTYA?*

As so often, the latest series of *WDYTYA?* kicked off with a quartet of terrific episodes. Can the trio of shows that follow hit the same heights? Indisputably yes, as the episode featuring Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill, who took gold in the heptathlon at the 2012 London Olympics, dramatically proves.

Jessica's father, Vinnie, was born in Jamaica and the island proves to be central to her research as, with the help of local historians, she traces the story of her 4x great grandfather, George Thomas White. Born into slavery in 1795, George was forced to work on a sugar plantation that Jessica visits. Knowing what she does, she finds the place eerie. George emerges from history as a resilient character, who eventually bought land from the very family who enslaved him.

Singer Olly Murs uncovers circus performers

She also traces the story of her great great grandmother, Maud. Family lore suggests that Maud simply left her family one day in 1919, and was never seen by them again. The truth proves to be rather more complicated than the myth.

Maud was committed to an asylum, where she died. The sense of tragedy only grows as Jessica begins to suspect that her forebear may have been hospitalised not because she was mentally ill, but because, in a patriarchal era, she was an unconventional and independent woman.

The episode featuring *The Only Way Is Essex* star Gemma Collins finds her researching her mother's side of the family. It's a story complicated by Gemma's mum having been fostered a mere two weeks after she was born.

Like Gemma, singer–songwriter Olly Murs hails from Essex. But go further back in time and his great grandparents were circus performers in Riga. Events in the early part of the Second World War, when Latvia was subsumed into Stalin's Soviet Union, cast a huge shadow here. They also help to explain why Olly's grandfather, who felt abandoned by his mother, was sent away as a refugee.

Titanic In Colour

Channel 4
Now streaming

More than a century after RMS *Titanic* hit an iceberg on its maiden voyage, our collective fascination with the doomed liner shows no sign of abating. Is there anything new left to say? Perhaps not, but this two-part documentary is nonetheless worth watching for the way it brings the world of the past alive through subtle colourisation of black-and-white images and film.

The first episode features footage of the liner being built in Belfast, while the second focuses on its final hours. Film taken aboard sister ship *Olympic* in 1921 helps to convey a sense of what it would have been like to travel aboard *Titanic* in 1912.

WW2: Women On The Frontline

Channel 4
Now streaming

Serving as pilots, journalists, spies and soldiers on the battlefield, women played key roles in defeating the Nazis during the Second World War, yet their service often went unrecognised, certainly after the fog of war had lifted. This three-part documentary goes some way to remedying this oversight by highlighting the stories of just some of those women who displayed huge courage between 1939 and 1945.

The theme of the first episode is espionage, and its highlights include the story of how American-French singer and dancer Josephine Baker used her celebrity to help the resistance and smuggle secrets to the Allies.

The second episode tells stories of those who flew, including Jackie 'Spitfire Girl' Moggridge of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), who delivered more than 1,400 military aircraft to where they were needed.

The final episode focuses on those who worked alongside men on the battlefield. Some were reporters, such as war correspondent and photojournalist Lee Miller. Others carried guns themselves, notably Soviet sniper Lyudmila Pavlichenko who was credited with killing 309 enemy combatants during such battles as the sieges of Odessa and Sevastopol. No wonder she was dubbed 'Lady Death'.

Auschwitz: The Inside Man

PBS America
Friday 4 October (TBC)

The story of Witold Pilecki should be far better known outside his native Poland. A cavalry officer, intelligence agent and resistance leader, he volunteered to be captured by the Nazis as a way to infiltrate the Auschwitz concentration camp. Here, he not only smuggled out information to the resistance movement detailing the conditions, but was a key figure in an organisation that distributed food and clothing, plus news from the wider world.

In 1943, Pilecki escaped from Auschwitz and later took part in the Warsaw Uprising. Sadly, he would ultimately be executed by the communist authorities following a show trial.

BBC/WALL TO WALL MEDIA

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'James Was Imprisoned By The Japanese'

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

The inspirational James Benson *(centre)* with his brothers George *(left)* and Howard's grandfather Harry

Howard Benson's great uncle was a priest and monk who endured a dire personal tragedy, followed by captivity on a Pacific island. By **Gail Dixon**

A fleet of Japanese destroyers loaded with soldiers was heading towards a quiet shore in the South West Pacific. A group of missionaries on the beach stared in alarm at the scene, and hastened locals to flee into the jungle.

Their base was the All Souls Anglican Mission in the village of Gona on Papua, which is now known as Papua New Guinea. Until the invasion of 21 July 1942, this peace-loving community had been unscathed by the Second World War.

The missionaries and locals wandered lost in the jungle for 19 days. One of them, Father James Benson, was separated from his colleagues during an enemy attack, and had to surrender after losing his way without his glasses. Two Gona female missionaries were murdered by the Japanese before open graves, and James was presumed dead.

This valiant priest was the great uncle of Howard Benson, who is fascinated by his life. "I've always known about James, but with more records coming online my knowledge of his story has increased," Howard explains.

James was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, in 1887 to David and Mary Benson (née Midgley). After leaving school, he studied at the Bradford School of Art before becoming a sign writer and house painter. In his twenties he experienced an epiphany, and decided to serve God as a lay preacher. He emigrated to Australia in 1910 and entered the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd at Dubbo, New South Wales. Several family members joined him in Australia, including Howard's grandfather Harry.

A benefaction fund enabled James to study theology, and he was ordained in 1916.

The following year, he married Bertha Weston and the couple had four children together.

"The family moved to Papua in 1920, where James did missionary work. The climate was challenging for young children, so they returned to New South Wales where James became rector of All Saints Bodalla.

"A terrible tragedy occurred near Bodalla that changed James' life forever. In 1928, the family was driving towards Batemans Bay to cross the Clyde River by car punt. It was dark, and James with his poor eyesight mistook the reflection of his headlights to be the lights of the punt, and drove into 15 feet of water. He struggled to get Bertha and the children out, but they all perished.

"Naturally, James was devastated at the loss of his family. He became a monk and joined the Community of the Ascension at Goulburn, which is near Canberra."

In 1937, he volunteered for missionary service in Papua again and served in Gona until the Japanese invasion.

After surrendering, James was held in a civilian prison, where he suffered physical and mental abuse, surviving on a meagre diet that worsened his eyesight. He was later moved to a concentration camp on the island of New Britain, off Papua.

"My great uncle wrote about his incarceration in his book *Prisoners Base and Home Again*. Despite his terrible ordeal, he never lost faith in God."

On release, James recuperated in Australia before returning to Papua where he painted murals in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in Dogura. In 1954, he visited Britain to learn how to make boots for barefoot parishioners who caught hookworm from the soil.

"James died in London in 1955, during an emergency appendectomy. His ashes were interred under the altar of Holy Cross Anglican Church (formerly All Souls) in Gona. A plaque in the floor that is dedicated to James reads, 'He helped us, he was kind to us, he loved us, he taught us the faith.'

"I visited Gona in 2007. To stand on the beach where James and the villagers would have watched the Japanese destroyers arrive was a very emotional experience for me."

James struggled to get Bertha and the children out, but they all perished

HOWARD BENSON lives in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, and is retired from an IT career

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Everything you need to know to take part this year

ALSO IN THE ISSUE

- Trace Theatrical Ancestors
- Research Methodists Online
- Find Relations In East Sussex

GETTY IMAGES

This was Sylvia's promise to you...

A generation ago, a woman named Sylvia made a promise. As a doctor's secretary, she'd watched stroke destroy the lives of so many people. She was determined to make sure we could all live in a world where we're far less likely to lose our lives to stroke.

She kept her promise, and a gift to the Stroke Association was included in her Will. Sylvia's gift helped fund the work that made sure many more of us survive stroke now than did in her lifetime.

Sylvia changed the story for us all. Now it's our turn to change the story for those who'll come after us.

Stroke still shatters lives and tears families apart. And for so many survivors the road to recovery is still long and desperately lonely. If you or someone you love has been affected by stroke – you'll know just what that means.

But it doesn't have to be like this. You can change the story, just like Sylvia did, with a gift in your Will. All it takes is a promise.

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or visit stroke.org.uk/legacy

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